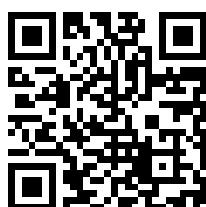
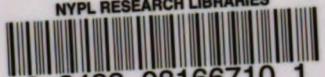

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Vol 36

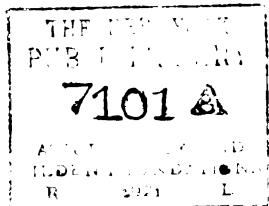
VOLUME VI.

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MARCH, 1877, TO AUGUST, 1877.

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LONDON:
SWEETING AND CO., PRINTERS,
80, GRAY'S INN ROAD, HOLBORN.

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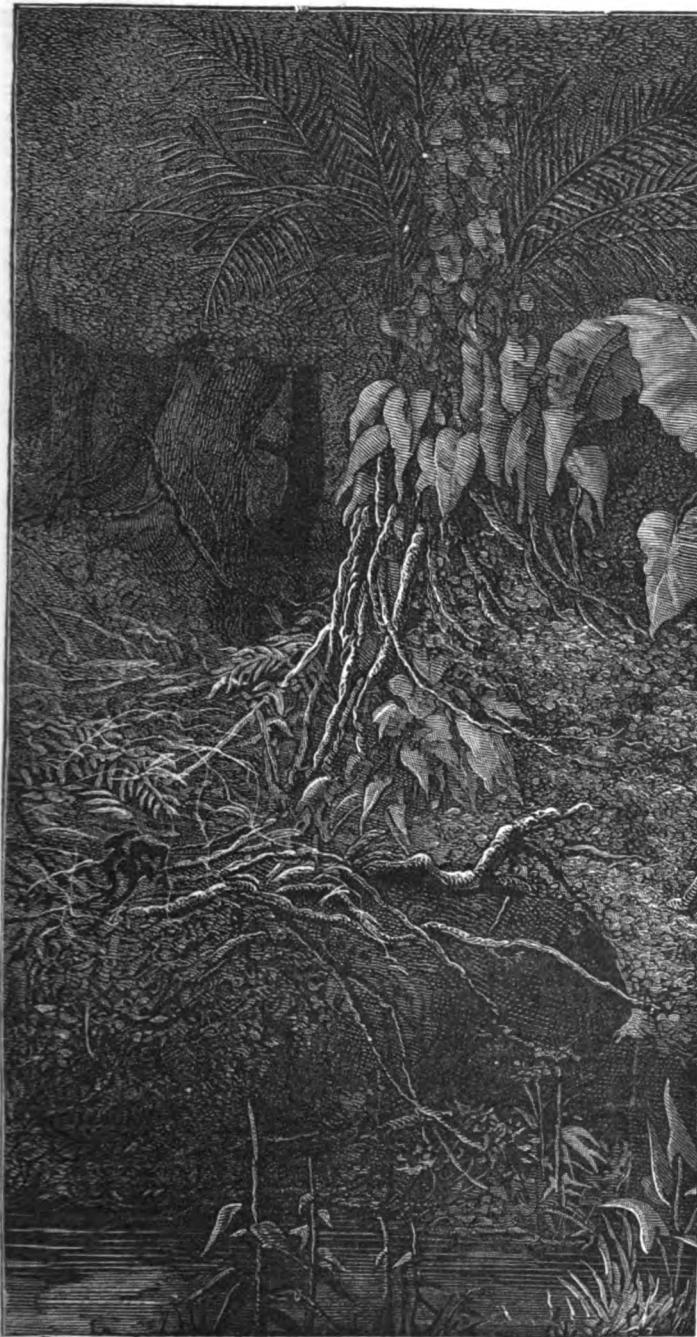
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ONCE A WEEK.

FOURTH SERIES.



My Narrow Escape.

MORNING in Mexico. Bright, glorious, inspiring morning in a land of flowers, sunshine, delicious breezes, open plains, and wondrous woods teeming with strange life, and where on rising with the sun the air seemed as inebriating as so much champagne.

I was there on a half-naturalist, half-hunting expedition, and a more invigorating, delightful time I never spent than at the hacienda of my friend, John Smith, or, as his savaneros called him, Don Juan Smiddi.

He had been out in Mexico leading the free life of a grazier and savage farmer for ten years; he spoke Spanish like a native; and with his black moustache, closely-cropped, black hair, pointed beard, and swarthy face, he would have passed for the best don amongst them.

"And do you really like the life?" I said to him.

"Like it, my dear boy! Why, I'm a king here. What are my troubles? Trifles about the stock—squabbles amongst my men, upon which I deliver judgment. While, as to my advantages—what are they not? I should have died of consumption at home, a poor man; here I am sound as a roach; money comes as fast as I want it; and in place of a narrow, beggarly, tattling civilization, I have freedom and the joys of this half-barbaric life. You've been here now two months. What do you say to it?"

"That I want to stop!" I said, merrily.

And I stayed.

There was a hunt in progress—a hunt for a simarron, and I wanted to go and join in.

Now, as I had never heard of a simarron before, I shall take it for granted that you never heard of such a creature till I mentioned it here, and I shall proceed to explain what it is.

At a hacienda like my friend's, situated amongst wild pampas and adjoining the primeval forest, where you could gallop for miles and still be on the land he considered as ap-

pertaining to him, one of the principal elements of wealth consists of cattle.

These animals partake to a certain extent of the nature of the country and have a decided tendency to wildness; but the cows, bulls, calves, and the generality of the oxen are pretty well managed by the savaneros—men who are almost always in the saddle tiring out half a dozen horses a-day sometimes in their long gallops to fetch up errant herds, or to lasso and drive in beasts meant for the butcher's knife, at the corral of the hacienda or farm.

It is a hard life, that of the savanero; but he is free and happy, he has to face the savage attacks of fierce members of the herd, falls from his horse, injuries from savage beasts, bites from tarantulas and snakes, and to tend the wounds received by the herds he watches; but his greatest difficulty is with the simarrons.

Every now and then, an ox which has been brought up to the corral for turning into beef, tallow, and leather, turns savage, breaks away, and, wise from his experience of what is intended for him, turns wild, and goes in for a life in the woods. Now, this wild ox, which becomes intensely savage, even as it grows active, swift, and beautiful in its muscular proportions, is called by the Mexican herdsman, or savanero, a simarron.

A cattle grazier looks upon the escape of one of these beasts as a serious loss—not so much from the intrinsic value of the one ox, but on account of its being the thin end of the wedge for what might be very serious from other animals being so badly watched that they might follow its example, so, when it is known that there is a simarron in the forest, the owner of the hacienda gives his men strict orders to lasso or shoot the beast; and if this is not done soon, in consequence of its fierceness and cunning, the final word is given, and it is this—

"No more beef will be served out to the men; they must kill the simarron, and cut him up."

Of course this means first catch your wild ox, and a general hunt follows.

It was to this hunt I was going on the beautiful morning I have named.

Smith said I had better not go, when I told him my wishes the night before.

"It is madness," he said. "No one can stand it but a man who has grown into his saddle."

"Oh, I can ride," I said.

"Yes, but that is not all," he said. "These simarrons are regular demons of cunning and strength. You see one; and, if he does not charge you, he dashes right at the forest behind him, apparently at a great curtain of leaves. He knows his place, and away he disappears; the leaves close behind him, and he is gone. He can gallop through the wood, but it would take you an hour, sword in hand, to cut yourself a way even through the leaves that bar the way."

"I'll risk all that," I said, "for the sake of the adventure."

"Very well," he said, smiling; "go, and I'll give you half an hour. At the end of that time you'll have had enough of it."

"We will see," I said, laughing.

"We will," he said. "You had better follow Cer-

vantes, he is the oldest and most trustworthy of the men, and I dare say he will try to protect you as well as give you a good view of the hunt. What are you going to ride?"

"Black Don," I said.

"No—no, old fellow," he replied. "He is too good and too handsome for the purpose. You'll bring him back with his flanks torn with thorns, if not with horns, and his eyes cut out. Take one of my old savanero's."

I agreed, and at five o'clock that morning the *patio* was all astir with the mounted men, laughing, chatting, and eager for the hunt, while those who had to stay looked doleful and discontented.

I heard the clattering of hoofs as I went out, and one of the men brought me a miserable-looking little steed. His knees were chipped, his tail ragged, and his coat none of the best; but after I had been on his back half an hour, I found he was a horse of good blood and mettle, while he had the training and sagacity which enabled him to avoid at full gallop the various dangerous obstacles in a place bristling with fallen trunks. He was also wonderfully sure-footed in rocky places, and could change from a gallop to a walk with great rapidity.

Altogether, I found that I was mistaken in rashly judging the qualities of my steed, so I would not venture to say anything about it to Cervantes.

He was a great, gaunt, Spanish half-breed, dry, grey-haired and angular, and moved in jerks, like an automaton. He put me greatly in mind of Don Quixote. A cup of coffee made us friends, and at last with a cheer we set off.

By six o'clock we had entered the virgin forest, a sombre, strangely oppressive place. The tracks of animals had grown more scarce and disappeared.

Cervantes, however, seemed to know his way, and led the train of horsemen steadily on, vowing by all the saints that he would bring back the simarron, dead or alive.

Every man carried his strong lasso of green hide, and had at his belt the inevitable machete, that strong half-breed between a knife and a sword, who had had a relative once that was a butcher's chopper.

For there no man thought of stirring without his machete, which was in frequent requisition for cutting the longer creepers and brushwood that intercepted our way.

Some of the men carried a gun, while those who were not so armed had their ordinary herdsmen's pricker or lance, mounted at the end with a keen, long spear blade, used upon such occasions, and a thrust from which would be fatal to any animal.

These spears I heard were of excellent temper and elasticity, and were for the most part forged by the native blacksmiths out of barrel stakes.

I can't say much for the guns which my companions carried. They looked as if they dated back to the days of the conquest of Mexico, and to me they seemed as if they ought rather to have been in the collection of an antiquary than in the hands of the poor people, whom they were bound to kill some day or other.

About seven o'clock there was a short council held, and then the party separated, leaving Cervantes and me together.

"I say, old fellow," I said, "you must go a little easier now, I'm not up to this bush-hacking. I can't go on cutting these lianos and things. My arm aches so now that I shall never be able to take aim."

Cervantes answered not a word, but went on sawing away at the creepers that impeded his progress, while I was lying flat on the back of my horse, going down its side, creeping under it—doing, in short, a kind of monkey gymnastic series of feats—to avoid being knocked off by branches hanging in wild vines, or torn to death by thorny creepers; for, no matter what took place, or how rough was the dense undergrowth, on went my horse, following closely the one before him.

After about twenty minutes of these exhibitions of circus-riding without a circus, I began to think very seriously of what John Smith had said, and I gave up, dead-beat.

My legs were torn, my loins bruised, my ribs crushed, my cartridge belt was half dragged off, my clothes ragged, and I felt full of thorns and bits of dead stick.

As for my stirrups, I could feel them no longer; the perspiration ran down my face, and off my hands.

"Here!—hi, Cervantes!" I shouted to the old rascal in front who was to take charge of me.

But he was so interested in the pursuit that he took no notice of me.

For, just then, the forest began to echo with the wild cries of his companions; and, with all the old hunter's instinct aroused in him, he hurried on, and in five minutes I was left alone.

"Hang the simarron," I gasped.

And, as there was just room, I got off my horse, and fastened his bridle to a branch, for he wanted to follow my guide's example, and to leave me alone.

"Oh, for a good drink of water," I cried, as I regretted coming without a gourd slung at my side.

What was I to do? Parched as I was, I felt that I must drink or faint; so I began to look about me till, on the left, it appeared to me that the undergrowth looked greener—a sure sign of the neighbourhood of water.

What I wanted to find was one of the chasms or cracks in the rocky earth, which occur frequently in these latitudes, and at the bottom of which there is generally a stream.

"Come along," I cried to my horse; and, unfastening his bridle, I led him with one hand, while I advanced slowly, keeping my machete going to cut down the creepers and bushes, without doing which I could not have advanced an inch.

Now, you kind friends who have never travelled, just pause for a moment, and listen to this arborescent mathematical sum, and then you will have some idea of what I had to encounter:

Take ten square yards of the toughest and oldest blackberry bramble thicket, and multiply it by a twenty-year-old quickset hedge.

Next, square the product.

Cube it.

Add ten thousand tubs of aloes.

Multiply by eight million cacti.

And the product will be something like this virgin forest.

As I expected, I arrived soon at the edge of a little cañon, whose farther side was not many yards away; but how deep this crack in the soil was I could not tell, for the dense vegetation.

It seemed to me very evident that my guide had been manœuvring so as to get to the head of this cañon, where there would probably be a good spot for a shot; but he had gone, and all I knew of the whereabouts of him and his companions was a distant shout now and then.

I wished I had followed him, because then I could have sat down and rested, and perhaps got a shot at the game as well.

Perhaps there would be time now, but I could do nothing until I had had some water.

At my feet was this ravine, with its precipitous sides; so hunting about, I found a lump of rock nearly covered with leaf soil, and digging it out with my machete, after being nearly hung up three or four times by my gun, which was slung over my shoulder, I replaced my great hunting knife in its sheath, and carried the stone to the edge of the ravine.

Crash—rush—splash.

The stone forced its way through the dense green undergrowth as I threw it out into the middle, and evidently it fell into water about a hundred feet or so below where I stood.

"Stay here, old boy," I said to my horse, as I saw that he was well secured; and then, going once more to the edge, I prepared to descend.

"A nice place for jaguars, serpents, centipedes, and unclean beasts of all descriptions!" I thought, as I picked out a likely spot; and then, clinging to the branches, bushes, and creepers, I began to descend.

Great trees grew from the sides, regular forest monarchs; and every minute, as I slowly crept down the great green chimney I made for myself, some great, snag-like, old, half-dead bough would seem to stick itself straight out on purpose to hook the strap of my gun, and stop my further progress.

I should think this happened a dozen times; but I would not part from so valuable a companion, and down I kept on, slipping and climbing slowly, sending little, vicious-looking snakes and lizards scuffling off, till I got about eighteen feet from the water, when I was so thoroughly hitched by a short, dead bough sticking from a huge trunk as I clung to a liana, that I was glad to slip out of the sling, leave the gun hanging, and slide down the rest of the way, thanking my stars that I had not broken my neck.

There ran a beautiful clear rill of water at my feet, and, stooping, I drank heartily and long, scaring a lovely little green frog as I did so.

Then, rising, I was admiring the beauty of the green, palm-like plants in the cool, gloomy, shady place, and it seemed to me that the best thing I could do was to walk slowly up the bed of the little rivulet to the head instead of climbing up the steep side of the cañon.

I had made up my mind to this, and climbed up a step or two to get my gun, when I heard a savage roar, and directly afterwards a splendid beast came into sight, galloping down the bed of the stream at a headlong pace, with part of a lasso twisted round one of its short, sharp-curving horns.

"No gun," I groaned, as the beast gave a jerk at me with its head, which brought a horn within a few inches of my waistband, and then it was gone.

I had hardly got my breath, which was taken away by the suddenness of the attack, when I heard the stones rattle in the bed of the stream, and the savage-looking beast galloped back.

It stopped short opposite to me, lowered its head and shook it, looking at me alternately with each of its fiery eyes, while its glossy flanks heaved, its tail lashed the air, and with one hoof it pawed and tore up the stones and water.

I was standing holding on with one arm to the rock, and I regret to say that I had not presence of mind enough to draw my machete, and try to do the matador work of the bullfighter. All I could do was to stand still watching my fierce enemy, expecting each moment that it would dash forward and bury its horns in my chest.

I believe there were only a few moments' suspense, but it seemed like an hour before there came plainly heard from above the shouts of the savaneros; when the animal threw up its head, snorted, and turning, dashed away down the leafy tunnel formed by the trees arching over the stream, and was gone.

I gave a sigh of relief, and then felt mad with myself for being such a pitiful huntsman as to leave my gun.

So, giving up the idea of going up the stream, partly because I must climb up to get my gun, and partly because I heard my companions overhead, I began to climb, got my gun, slung it with some difficulty across my shoulders, and then, at the end of a minute, got it off again, for it kept on catching the trees and arresting my progress in this really thorny and difficult climb.

When, at last, after endless slips and scratchings, I got within thirty feet of the top, I had to stop, for I could get no farther without walking like a fly; and I was about to descend, and try to get to the top by going up the stream, when I heard voices, and, on shouting, Cervantes answered—

"Hallo," he said, "how did you get there?"

"Never mind," I said, sulkily, as I peered up at his grim face looking over the edge of the precipice—"never mind how I got here. How am I to get out?"

For answer he shouted to some of his companions, and then lowered down his lasso.

"Hold tight," he said.

And I did, and was ignominiously hauled out by half-a-dozen men, to mount my horse, scratched, tired, bruised, and worried by the worst temper I was ever in.

My sourness was not greater than that of my companions, especially that of one poor fellow, who had thrown his lasso, catching the simarron by one horn, when the lasso broke; but not until its owner was dragged out of the saddle by the animal's rush, and one arm was broken.

We had a dreary ride back. Don Juan, as they called him, bullied the whole party, and laughed at me, saying—

"I told you so."

But I was not beaten. I went that same afternoon and found Cervantes.

"Could you find the place where that beast sleeps at night?" I said.

"Yes," he replied; "but what's the good of that?"

"I'll show you," I said. "You and I will go and shoot him to-night."

I set to with my preparations, getting an old frying-pan, in which I mixed some resin and cotton refuse. To the handle I tied a forked stick, arranging it with stakes and stumps so that the pan would hang behind me from my shoulders at about a couple of feet distance, leaving my hands at liberty for the use of my gun.

Cervantes grinned, but he was ready at the appointed time, and we rode through the darkness to a more open part of the wood, where we arrived at the end of a three hours' journey.

I was horribly tired, but I did not show it; and Cervantes having announced that we were within a hundred yards of an opening where he believed the simarron would be found, we alighted, secured our horses, saw that our guns were ready, and then going softly on we crept close to the opening, when I made my final preparations.

"What are you going to do, master?" said Cervantes.

"Light the resin," I said, "and shoot the simarron when he comes forward out of curiosity to see the meaning of the blaze."

"Good," said my guide, with a grunt of complacency; and then, striking a match, I set fire to my cotton and resin, the contents of the pan blazed up, and with it slung behind my back, I walked forward, seeing well all that was before me without being dazzled by the flame.

The place was eighty or ninety yards across, and Cervantes and I went cautiously on, step by step, watching the trees lit up by the blaze and the black shadows it cast, ever silent and watchful till we were nearly across, when, disappointed, disheartened, and worn-out, I exclaimed, in a tone of disgust—

"I say, old fellow, he isn't here."

As I spoke, something big seemed to bounce up just at my feet.

I knew it was the great brute we were in search of; but his appearance was so sudden, and took me so thoroughly by surprise, that back I went, stumbled over a tuft of shrub, and nearly lost my balance, while I gave the pan such a jerk that a drop of the hot, sputtering, burning resin fell on to my bare neck, making me forget wild bull, gun, everything in my agony as I dashed the burning resin down.

As I recovered somewhat, I knew that my chance was gone, for the simarron had made a dash off to the left, and I felt savage enough to punch my own head, when bang went Cervantes' gun, and I saw the great beast totter and fall, sufficient blaze arising from the overthrown pan to light up the whole scene.

I had not fired the shot, which was disappointing; but my turn came, for stunned but not killed by the shot, the simarron rose and charged straight at me, the fire shining full on his broad front and short, black horns, between which I sent a bullet with such

effect that the huge beast went down on his knees, turned a complete somersault, and rolled over motionless.

Cervantes gave a loud cheer, while I, with my machete, delivered the *coup de grâce*, in case any life should be remaining in the huge body; after which we sat upon it contentedly, after lighting our pipes, and piling wood over the blazing pan to keep up a fire; for our duty was to watch for the rest of the night, to preserve our trophy from the jaguars that two or three times made night hideous with their howls; and had we not been there to scare them with the fire, doubtless they would have had some of the primest, gamest beef I ever ate for their supper.

As it was, we sat till morning, the old fellow telling me plenty of hunting stories; and then he fetched a party of the savaneros, who skinned, dressed, cut up, and took home the beast in triumph.

And beef was plentiful for the next two days.

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER VIII.—SI GETS HIS DISMISSAL.

IN good time the next morning Mr. Townsend presented himself at Si Slocum's house, walking in with a rather pompous aspect, to find Jerry there, on his knees, polishing the fender for his mistress.

"Where is Slocum?" said Mr. Townsend, pompously.

"You mean Mass' Si Slocum, sah?" said Jerry Blackburn, getting up from his work.

"I mean Silas Slocum, my man," said Mr. Townsend, sharply. "Be quick, you black scoundrel, and tell him I'm here."

He turned his back, and, as he did so, Jerry made a hideous grimace, and raised his fist as if to strike the speaker; but Mr. Townsend turning sharply round, Jerry's fist nearly encountered that gentleman's head.

He raised his stick angrily, but Jerry darted out of the door.

"I guess I like to know who he call black 'coundrel,' he cried.

And then hunting out his master from where he was busy amongst the horses, Slocum went quietly in.

"Now, Mr. Silas Slocum," said Mr. Townsend, authoritatively, "I've come to put an end to our engagement."

"Very good, sir," said Si, coolly.

"There," said Mr. Townsend, counting out thirty dollars in greenbacks—"there is the amount due to you, sir, and you are free."

"There's twenty-five dollars due to me, sir," said Si, slowly, picking up that amount, and passing back the odd five. "I take no more than I've earned from you nor any man."

"Indeed," said Mr. Townsend, "you are mighty particular for an honest man."

"Honest men are particular, Mr. Townsend."

"Honest men are," said Mr. Townsend. "But honest men are more particular how their wives tamper with the morals of young girls."

"Hold hard there, sir," said Si. "Perhaps my wife was a little wrong over letting them young people meet here; but she's very sorry she did, and I ask your pardon."

"It comes too late, Silas Slocum," said Mr. Townsend. "You are in my service no longer."

"Guess I'm 'bout glad," said Si. "I was precious tired on it."

"You insolent rascal," cried the old man.

"Don't call quiet dogs names," said Si, quietly. "Sometimes it riles 'em, and they bite."

"Do you dare to threaten me?" said Mr. Townsend.

"Oh, no," said Si. "I only said let me alone. I'm not yewre servant now."

"No, sir; and I've been mad to act against the advice of a friend, and retain you in my service so long, for you are believed to be dishonest."

Si's hand went into his breast, and grasped the pocket-book; but he felt that his time had not come, so he forbore.

"Guess Vasquez has been saying that, has he?" said Si.

"I answer no questions, sir," said Mr. Townsend, haughtily, as he put on his gloves. "Think yourself very fortunate that I did not send for the police, and have you examined as to sundry petty pilferings which have taken place at the office."

"I thought they'd try and fix me with that," said Si, quietly. "I told my wife so. And now, look here, Mr. Townsend, I feel kinder disposed to have the police in, and this matter looked up. I feel as if I should like to be put face to face with Mr. Vasquez."

"Slocum, you are brazen to a degree," cried the old man, wrathfully, "and, like all evil-disposed men, strike at your best friends. Mr. Vasquez has not accused you of these petty pilferings, but defended you warmly, as being above any such meannesses."

"I'm much obliged to him," said Si; "but he must have had some turn to serve."

"Worse and worse," said Mr. Townsend. "Slocum, you are an abandoned scoundrel."

"Hold hard," said Si. "Now, look here, Mr. Townsend. I've eaten your bread for some time, but I never engaged to eat your sauce. I pay you rent for this house, and while I do it's mine. You came in here without asking my leave; and ever since you've been here I've been fighting down the bad passion that's in every man's character. Now, go, sir, and don't show your face over my doorstep again till I ask you, or till you come to ask my pardon, and tell me I am an honest man."

"You insolent dog!" exclaimed the old man, beside himself with passion.

And, raising his cane, he struck Si Slocum across the face.

In an instant Si had him by the throat, pinned against the wall, when a loud shriek ran through the house, and Si Slocum's hands fell to his side.

CHAPTER IX.—HOT BOILED BEANS AND VERY GOOD BUTTER.

"THEN he shouldn't have roused me, my gal," said Si, as he sat moodily in his chair by the fireside. "I'd no idea of hurting the old man, but a blow makes me forget everything. Well, there, you screamed, and I let go; and he's gone out, and there's an end of it."

Saying this, Si rose and marched off to his work; but, altering his mind, he walked into the busy part of the town and sought out Wallace Foster, whom he consulted on the question that he had discussed with his wife.

The next day, he was off pretty early; and, as he had to give up his ordinary duties at once, he took a little pains to render himself less of the worker in appearance by putting on the jacket that had hung upon the wall for the past few days.

Ruth Slocum, after seeing to her domestic affairs, was at her everyday work of making a pudding, and little Freddie seated out in the sunshine taking lessons from Jerry in the art of making Jack the dog balance biscuit on his nose, till told to take it; when the black had to announce a visitor in the shape of Mrs. Bledsoe, who had come according to appointment, and was soon after closeted with Mrs. Slocum in an inner room.

"Give me some more biscuit, Jerry," said the boy, as the black went out again.

"Not got bit more in de world," said Jerry. "But ah say, ah'll get you bit bread crust—you wait."

Jerry sneaked very cautiously into the house, listening attentively lest he should be caught; and then, stealing cautiously towards the larder, he was about to enter and get the bread, when a step at the door startled him, and pulling up the table-cloth—spread while the pudding-making was in progress—he backed under the table.

"Dah's some one a-comin'," he muttered, as he held the cloth a little on one side; and, as he did so, the cunning-looking face of Jake Bledsoe appeared above the flowers at the window, for he had paused there, as the boy and the dog were just round the corner by the door.

"He comin' to t'eye something," said Jerry to himself; and, stealing out on one hand, he quietly reached up to the top of the table, and made himself the master of Mrs. Slocum's rolling-pin.

Meanwhile, having apparently satisfied himself that the room was empty, Jake Bledsoe climbed lightly on the widow-sill, and, as active as a cat, leaped down into the room.

His first act was to listen for a moment, with one hand in his breast, in which was placed a packet of something long buttoned up inside his vest; then he ran to the yard door and peeped out, Jerry's black face peering after him curiously as the negro watched every action.

"I guess him out ob him mind," muttered Jerry.

And he drew his head under cover; for Jake Bledsoe came lightly back, ran to the first door he saw, and listened. Then, satisfied that all was right, he ran to the other, heard voices, and ran back, took the parcel from his breast, and, followed by Jerry's curious eyes, he ran to a press and thrust in a part of

that which he had brought, ran across the room, opened a cupboard, on the top shelf of which he placed a long, flat glove-box, and then, running to the middle of the room, he nearly caught Jerry, whose black head darted in, while the table-cloth was sticking straight out.

But Jerry drew back in time; though, to his dismay, he found that the strange visitor pulled up the cloth, and seemed about to order him to come out.

Jake Bledsoe, however, was quite innocent of his presence; for he only pulled out the shallow table drawer, thrust in a few folds of black lace, shut the drawer, and let the table-cloth fall.

Just then there was the sound of voices talking loudly in the next room; and Bledsoe ran lightly to the door, placed his ear to the keyhole, and then literally staggered away.

"My wife!" he gasped; and then, recovering himself, he ran to the door to escape. "Snags!" he ejaculated, huskily, "the boy and that cursed dog."

He ran to the window, and was about to leap out, but only fell backwards; for the mustang, accustomed to be fed and caressed there, thrust in its head, and, on seeing a stranger, whinneyed and essayed to bite.

"I shall be caught," gasped the frightened man; and, making for the only means of exit that seemed open to him, he darted for the larder door.

As he did so, Jerry crept swiftly out from beneath the table, rolling-pin in hand.

"I guess I gib dat chap somefin," he said, as he ran nimbly and placed himself on one side of the door. "What he come here for, poke about our house, eh? Wait till you show youself 'gain, sah; I make you t'ink dere am big 'torm an' t'under and lightnum."

For the place in which Jake Bledsoe had taken refuge was little more than a big cupboard, from which he was waiting to escape.

At the end of a minute, the door was opened cautiously; but, as the voices still came loudly from the further room, it was drawn to again.

After a few seconds, it was opened again, and the window being now clear, Jake determined to make a rush for it; and, taking a long breath, he bounded out.

His leap was not so quick but that Jerry got one crack at him with the rolling-pin—a blow which sent him stumbling forward; but, with an oath, he recovered himself, and, at the expense of a couple of pots of Ruth Slocum's flowers, leaped clean from the window, and escaped before Jack awakened to the fact that there was anything wrong.

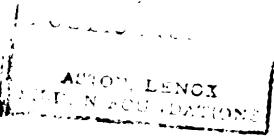
"Dat make um see t'under and lightnum, a big t'ief," said Jerry, grinning; and then, replacing the rolling-pin, he proceeded to take out the three packages from press, cupboard, and drawer.

These the black looked at with intense curiosity, ending by placing all inside his shirt, and coolly going off to the larder for the bread crust he had come to fetch.

"Guess anybody play hot bile beans an' butter wif Jerry Blackburn, dis chile know where to get very hot and burn himself. Tell you what, sah, I go to hide um now, and you come to find it'll be berry hot, for dis colour gentlum be on de look-out wid um 'tick."



"MY NARROW ESCAPE."—(Page 1.)



Jerry went off with his find to stow it away somewhere about the stables, after giving Freddie his bread for the dog.

He had hardly left the room before Ruth Slocum returned with her visitor, who was loaded with work, and full of protestations and thanks.

"Well, I guess you must keep time with them," said Ruth, "for we shall soon be going off again to the West."

"Going away from New York?" said Mrs. Bledsoe.

"Yes, I reckon my husband will soon be pulling up stakes, and seeking a home somewhere right away," said Ruth.

"Then you'll most likely meet my husband, Mrs. Slocum," said her visitor; "he's wandering about somewhere there."

"Well, and if I did," said Ruth, "what then? I don't want no husband."

"But I do," said Mrs. Bledsoe; "and oh, when I do catch him—"

She did not finish her sentence, but there was a great deal of meaning in the opening and shutting of her hand, and the way in which she drew in a long breath.

"But," said Ruth, "I can't catch him for you."

And she look in an amused way at her visitor.

"Oh, but you could," said Mrs. Bledsoe—"for he's one of the greatest cowards under the sun. If you see him, seize him and hold him till Mr. Slocum comes. But there, it's just like me, I always get inflicting my troubles on other people. Ah! Mrs. Slocum, you've got a good husband, while I've got a bad one."

"Had a bad one," said Ruth, smiling.

"No, got a bad one; for he's alive still, and I think I shall reform him yet—I mean to try," said Mrs. Bledsoe; and she went out, evidently with that intention—a very laudable one, but about as possible as making ropes of sand; for the only way to make a good man out of Jake Bledsoe would have been to kill him, resolve him as quickly as possible into his natural elements of salt and gas, and leave nature to do the rest.

CAPTURE OF THE SEA SERPENT.—During the afternoon of Monday we saw a "sea serpent;" and, what is more, actually caught it. It was not formidable-looking, nor very big—two feet at the most. The cook, leaning over the bulwarks drawing a bucket of water, called our attention to a snake quietly gliding through the water, which, being a dead calm, was as smooth as glass. As its motion was very slow, we resolved to catch it; so, bending a rope's end on to a bucket, the cook cleverly hauled the marine monster aboard. It closely resembled the common adder, and had very probably been washed out to sea by one of the rivers, although, the land not being visible, the coast must have been many miles off. I felt almost sorry we had caught it; for had we not, it would undoubtedly have crossed some other ship's path less practical but more imaginative, whose captain would have made an entry in the log to the effect that he had really seen the sea serpent, of vast size and diabolical looks. The captain preserved it in a bottle of spirits of wine.—*Two Years Abast the Mast.*

Three Hundred Virgins.

A TALE OF THE SOUTHERN SEAS.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—AT THE HEAD OF AMAZONS.

"NOW, girls," cried Helston, seizing his axe as he saw the extent of the danger to which they would be exposed, "the time has come for you to show, in real earnest, that you can act like men when called upon."

"Oh!" shrieked one girl—"run, run."

A dozen were about to follow her example; but Helston's voice arrested them.

"Let no one stir," he shouted, fiercely. "Do you want to be cut down, one by one, by those savages? Keep together, show a bold front here behind this rubbish we have thrown out; and, if the savages are not startled by our firmness, why you must all fight in defence of your lives."

"But I am horribly frightened," whispered one poor girl; but Helston heard her.

"So am I," he said, smiling. "So is everybody who is called upon to face danger till the danger comes, then he is too much excited to think about it. Come, girls, show that you are the daughters of Englishmen, and fight bravely; for I tell you that, if we give way, a fate is reserved for you all worse than death."

"Yes, sah, dey cook and eat um all," said 'Thello, in a lachrymose tone.

Then, roused by the smarting pain of his wound, he pulled out his knife savagely, and, showing his teeth, prepared to give a good account of the next savage who should approach.

Laurent, too, stood ready with a formidable-looking stake; and Helston's eye brightened as he saw the return of vigour in his old friend.

This show of determination had its effect upon the women, who numbered in their ranks some of the sturdiest of the party. One seized her stake, and held it menacingly; then another stood ready, and, in less than a minute, after a few dispositions made by their leader, the band of forty women, taking courage the one from the other, presented a formidable front to the coming enemy.

Helston was no general, but he knew enough to feel that a *chevaux de frise* of forty pointed stakes, which could be put in motion by as many strong pairs of arms, would prove a formidable obstacle to a party of effeminate savages, whose arms were only wooden clubs and spears. He believed, too, in a good, bold front.

Just as the preliminary arrangements were made, one of the women uttered a kind of sob that sounded hysterical; and Helston started, and looked anxiously round, for, knowing the infectious nature of a hysterical seizure amongst a party of women, he was in dread lest half the party should melt into tears, and the others take to flight.

To his great joy, however, the girl who had given vent to her emotion turned her flushed and excited face towards her leader, and smiled, as she exclaimed—

"It's all over now."

Helston took in the situation at a glance, and drew hope from the result.

He argued that if the savages knew that the occupants of the island were, with three exceptions, women, the result would, of course, be overthrow; but, though they might have got the better of those they had first attacked, and known that they were women, it was only reasonable to suppose that they would believe that they had now to deal with the men of the party, and lack somewhat of their daring.

"Stand firm," said Helston; "don't give way, whatever you do. Laurent, 'Thello, and I will stand a yard or so in front of you, and fight our best; but you must support us with your stakes, using them as spears, or striking with them, whichever you can do best. Only remember this—the woman who gives way fights against all the rest."

"We won't give way, Mr. Helston," said one, acting as spokeswoman. "We'll all stand by you. If one of the wretches comes near me I'll tear his eyes out."

There was a murmur of acquiescence ran along the lines, for Helston had ranged them in twos, and it is to be presumed that the murmur alluded to the former part of the woman's speech.

Meanwhile the savages, who were about twenty in number, came running on in the most reckless manner, waving their clubs and spears, and flourishing a kind of shield they carried aloft.

This was the time of the greatest trial, and Helston, as he took his place with his companions, trembled for the firmness of his troops, especially when a long-drawn sigh seemed to run along the front.

"Don't mind their shouts," he said, aloud. "They are only to frighten us. Keep a bold front, and we shall frighten them."

It did not seem like it, however, for the savages came on at a run; but when about fifty yards off they slackened pace, began to walk, and, finally, paused about thirty yards from the defenders of the island.

They were a fierce-looking set, with their bodies largely tattooed and painted; but in the excitement of the moment, though the curious moaning sigh seemed to run along the ranks of the women again, they stood firm, and Helston felt a thrill of pleasure, as he knew that it was the example set that kept them so steady in such a time of need.

Directly the savages stopped short, a couple of them, evidently chiefs, ran to and fro, talking and gesticulating, furiously throwing their arms aloft, and their address was answered by a diabolical yell.

"Only to frighten us," said Helston, turning to his followers, "and we are not a bit dismayed. Now, girls, when they do come, think every one of you that you possess the muscles of a man, and strike hard for your lives."

There was a muttered response to this, and Helston turned to Laurent on his right, who had a tremendous stake in his hands, with a fire-hardened point like iron.

"Bring one man down, whatever you do, Laurent," he said.

Laurent nodded.

"I'll answer for two at least," he said, quietly.

Helston turned to 'Thello, and saw the black wiper the blood from his forehead with one hand, look at

it, and then, in place of being dismayed, show all his white teeth in an ugly grin as he rolled up the fragment of a shirt sleeve on his right arm, grasped his knife firmly, and exclaimed—

"Look out, some ob you dere—I teach you cut colour gentlum ober de head."

There was so much hesitation now evinced by the savages that Helston felt that a bold attack on his part would carry the day. But he had not tried his Amazons, and he hesitated to alter their strong formation for one which would throw them more open to attack.

In fact, at one time the savages seemed disposed to beat a retreat; but this phase did not last long, and at last they uttered another yell, hurled half a dozen spears, and came on.

Helston knew that this discharge had not been without effect, for there was a shrill cry behind him as a spear whizzed by his ear, and a low groan.

One spear, however, that was low aimed, stuck in the ground by Laurent's legs, and dropping his stake, he seized the weapon, turning its point against the attacking party.

The savages followed their spears with a fierce yell and a rush, and then all was confusion.

As to leading or directing, Helston forgot all that on the instant—he only recalled the fact that a terrible fate awaited Grace Monroe if these wretches were not beaten off; and for the next ten minutes his sole thought was to slay, as he wielded with terrible force the keen-edged axe.

At the first onslaught, the savage who rushed straight at him received the full force of Helston's blow on his shield, which the axe cut through, and so horribly mutilated the man's arm that he fled shrieking away.

At the second swing of the axe, it encountered the stem of a war-club, which it drove back full on its holder's face, and the man rolled over, stunned.

Helston's next blow was more dire in its effects; for, as he received a stroke from a waddy, the axe caught the striker full on the temple, crashed with awful violence into his skull, and, as he fell, the young man had to plant his foot on his dead enemy's face while he wrenched it out.

Laurent had done his best too for the defence, transfixing one enemy, and severely wounding another; while 'Thello leaped about like a demon, cutting, stabbing, and dealing direful mischief amongst his foes.

This was just in the centre of the fray. Right and left of the leaders a terrible conflict had gone on, for the savages had leaped at the women like demons; and though the poor girls had fought bravely, as the prostrate bodies of several savages showed—these being, for the most part, writhing in agony from stabs in the face and eyes, delivered by the pointed stakes—several women lay severely wounded, and the savages were attacking the others with full prospect of obtaining an easy victory, so much better were they armed.

In the attack the women had been driven back twenty or thirty yards, and they now fought back to back, resisting the savages, who ran round them, making fierce thrusts with their spears.

But now that they had rid themselves of their

own immediate enemies, the three men rushed to their help, and at the first charge as many savages went down; then Helston cut down a couple more, Laurent transfixed another, breaking his spear, and wresting a war-club from his enemy, while 'Thello engaged in a hand-to-hand conflict with a burly savage, the result being that they closed and wrestled till they fell.

This changed the state of affairs, for seeing so many of their companions fall, the rest of the attacking party turned and fled towards their canoes.

"After them!" roared Helston, starting in pursuit.

And the women uttered a shrill cry and took up the chase, driving their enemies before them.

As they neared the canoes, Laurent uttered a cry of warning; for about twenty more savages, who had been watching the prisoners they had taken, started into sight from round the point, and prepared to help their discomfited comrades.

"On—on!" roared Helston, waving his axe.

And at that moment, 'Thello, who had rid himself of his adversary by a stab, came running swiftly to the front, with all his savage blood rising to his head, and as the flying savages disordered their friends by their headlong flight, the panic was increased by the fierce attack of the three men, who each struck down an enemy.

The overthrow was completed by the women, who, now mad with excitement, rushed upon their foes, causing so great a panic that a rush was made for the canoes, the savages scrambling in and forcing them through the breakers, paddling for their lives, and leaving not only half their number, but a couple of their canoes behind.

"Quick!" cried Helston; "bows—arrows!"

Before, however, these could be brought into use the savages were out of range, and were paddling away with all their might, without apparently a thought of those who were left behind.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—A NIGHT ATTACK.

AS the canoes made off, Helston turned to give fresh orders, but a deadly feeling of sickness came over him, and he nearly fell.

He made a tremendous effort, though, to recover himself, and merely staggered against one of the women, who supported him.

"Quick! a bandage," he cried, hoarsely, "and some water."

These were brought, and the feeling of faintness passed off as he saw that it was Grace Monroe who ran up, tearing a bandage from her own dress, and under his direction tightly bound it round the fleshy part of his left arm, which had been transfixed by a spear and was bleeding profusely.

"Is it—is it dangerous?" she gasped, looking deathly pale, as she gazed in his blood-smeared, excited face.

"Not half so dangerous as your cruelty," he exclaimed, turning from her, and seeking now to help those who needed his aid.

And now he found that five of the savages had fled along the edge of the lava and gone inland, where they had been pursued for a time by the women, who were now returning panting from their unsuccessful chase.

"Are you hurt, Laurent?" said Helston, as he came up to his friend, who was leaning on a spear.

"A few cuts, that's all," was the reply.

"And you, 'Thello? Where's 'Thello?" cried out Helston.

"He was here just now, sir," said a woman whose face and hands were dabbled with blood.

"Are you hurt?" said Helston, turning to her.

"No, sir," said the woman, wonderingly; and then, glancing at the blood upon her hands and clothes, she shuddered, and said in a hoarse whisper, "I killed one of those savages—the stake entered his throat—it is his blood. Ugh!"

She was turning away, apparently horrified by her deed, but Helston took her hand.

"You behaved like a true Englishwoman," he said, "and it was in defence of your sisters."

The girl grasped his hand warmly, and her eyes spoke her gratitude as Helston turned away.

"One, two—four of the savages," he said, looking round. "Mind how you go near them, wounded men are very dangerous. What!" he said, in horror, as one of the girls, holding a bloody stake, whispered something to him.

"Yes, sir, he looked horrible, and as if he was half mad as he did it. We dared not interfere."

"What, stabbed the wounded men as they lay there?"

"Drove his knife into their breasts, one after the other," said the girl, in an awe-stricken voice.

"Here, Laurent—quick!" cried Helston; "come to the ship, or we shall be too late."

He set off at a run, followed by Laurent, who could hardly keep pace with him, being faint from loss of blood; and as they got within sight of where they had been at work digging down to the ship, there was 'Thello, just rising up from apparently leaning over the body of one of the Indians.

Several were lying about the scene of the struggle; and there were four of the women, to whose help Helston hurried, upbraiding himself for not attending to them before, though in his wounded and excited state, the wonder was that he had thought for any other than himself.

'Thello met them with a savage look in his face as they reached the first of their prostrate enemies.

"Dead, sah—quite dead," he said.

They walked on to the next, to find him also quite dead. In fact, there was not one breathing.

"These men were not all dead, 'Thello," said Helston, sternly.

"No, sah, not all dead, but drefle bad all ob dem, and I put 'em out ob dere misery."

"Do you mean to own frankly," said Helston, with a shudder, "that you killed these poor wretches in cold blood?"

"No, sah, I kill 'em all in hot blood, 'cause I in drefle, mad, sabbage passion, sah."

"Oh, 'Thello, this is too horrible!" said Helston.

"You t'ink um horrible, sah—eh, sah? You put your finger on dat cut in dis chile head, and toder finger in opem hole in um soljur. I tink dat berry horrible, too. It make dis coloured pusson tink about fight when he boy, and dey kill, and burn, and sell for slave; and when he get tink like dat,

all de blood run in um eyes, and he see red, and den he go kill all he can."

"But your wounded enemies, 'Thello!" cried Helston.

"Thello no ask de sabbage rascal come to island, and try kill ebbery body here, sah. If dey come and kick up bobbery, dey muss take de consequence."

"Nothing excuses this murder in cold blood, 'Thello," said Helston, turning away, and hurrying to the women.

"I tell um on'y just now, Mass' Laurent, dat I no kill um in cold blood; but when I in tremenus passhun, hot as hot—hot as de lava dere—I on'y kill um quick, so dey not die slow. Mass' doctor dere nebbah tink any harm chop down de fellah wid dat chopper he got, eh?"

"But these men were helpless," said Laurent.

"Some on 'em—some were berry fierce, indeed, and not want to be kill at all. But I say, Mass' Laurent, sah, 'pose I no kill de sabbages, and you come and take 'em prisoners, what you do wiv um—keep um quiet, eh! 'Pose dey all rise up and kill ebberybody? Dat berry pleasant t'ing, sah—eh, sah?"

Laurent was as much horrified as his friend at the black's act, but he could not help acknowledging to himself that, by the course taken, they had been saved from a terrible responsibility and trouble.

"We nebbah ask dem to come here, sah, and pull de island to piece. No, sah, not at all," continued the black, indignantly. "It all berry fine Mass' Helston get on high horse, and call names; but if dese common trash come here killin' people, dey must take de consekens. Look dere, sah," he cried, excitedly, as he pointed to the prostrate figure of one of the women; "boofle lilly woman killed wid 'pear. 'Noder boofle lilly woman got brain knock out. Two ob dem, too, berry bad hurt; look at dem—doctor hardly know what to do. Mass' Laurent, sah, I did kill some ob de ruffyums who come and do all dis; and Mass' Helston go call name for ebber, he no make me sorry for um."

The greater part of this discourse was addressed to the air, for Laurent had hastened to Helston's assistance; and now many of the women had come up to lend their aid.

As 'Thello said, two of the women were dead, and there were two badly wounded.

One of the dead had been killed by the first flight of spears, while the other had received a fearful club blow in the *mélée*.

One of the wounded had received her injury, too, in the first flight of the spears, as she stood close behind Helston. It was the spear, in fact, that whizzed by his ear; but the poor girl bore her pain without a murmur, as did her companion, who was very much injured by the savages' spears.

They were carried carefully into their camping ground, where a score of willing hands were ready to nurse. Grace Monroe being among the first to make preparations for the wounded.

And now, while sick at heart, and with everything swimming before him, Helston finished bandaging their injuries; one by one he had to attend to quite a dozen more wounded girls, who, kept up hereto-

fore by the excitement, now kept fainting or staggering up for their injuries to be seen to.

Laurent tried to help the doctor; but at the first trial he fainted, and was glad to lie down on the sand, waiting for his own turn to come.

Had it not been for Mary Dance, who proved herself well worthy of the post of surgeon, it would have gone hard with some of the suffering girls; but on seeing the state of affairs, she called Grace Monroe to her side, and they improvised bandages, roughly tied up wounds in a temporary manner till the doctor could attend to them, besides setting others to contrive resting-places for the wounded, and supply them with fruit and water to quell the fever that parched their lips.

The last patient being attended to—the three last having been Laurent, 'Thello, and himself—Helston lay down perfectly exhausted, and, in spite of himself, fell into a deep sleep, from which he started just at sundown, when he tried to rise, but fell back half-fainting, for his injuries were more severe than he would have allowed.

"Who's this?" he said, as some one bent over him.

"Mary Dance," was the reply.

"What time is it?" he asked—"how long have I been asleep?"

"Many hours," was the reply; "it is now sundown."

"Good heavens!" he ejaculated. "What is to be done? My patients?"

"They are all sleeping easily and well," said Mary.

"But the canoes?"

"Those that were left have been drawn up safely with their paddles and sails. Those that the savages went away in have been out of sight since midday."

"That is good," muttered Helston—"but if they return?"

"The women are now divided into two parties," said Mary, feeling that her information would tend to calm the injured man, "and they are going to take it in turns to watch—those who watch being well armed with the savages' spears and clubs."

"But the surprise, Mary, how was it?"

"I cannot tell," said Mary—"it was so sudden. We were all busy here when the savages, who had approached the shore unseen, landed, and rushed among us. The rest you know."

"And those poor girls who were killed?" said Helston, hoarsely.

"They are being laid in their last resting-place now," said Mary, solemnly. "Graves have been dug by the burnt grove, where the grass is springing up so greenly, and in a short time the party will return."

"Thanks, thanks," said Helston, "it is as I could wish. A terrible visitation, Mary—terrible. This responsibility is almost more than I can bear. Oh, if I had but strength!"

"That will soon come," said Mary; "you know that, if you will lie patiently, and wait."

"Yes, yes, I know," he said. "Loosen this bandage, Mary, the wound throbs horribly. Thanks, thanks. You are a good, true girl, Mary," he muttered, kissing her hand. "But these plans—this watching, and arming, and the rest—who has done all this?"

"Grace Monroe," was the reply.

Helston started, and then lay silent for a time.

"Mary," he said at last, "see that Deborah is carefully watched."

"She has been more calm of late," said Mary; "but she shall be watched."

"And, above all," said Helston, "recollect that those Indians who escaped inland may return at any moment."

"They shall be watched for," said Mary, calmly. "Now try to sleep. To-morrow we shall want your help again, doctor, for the wounded."

"Yes, yes," he said.

And he sank to sleep, with the murmur of the sea in his ear; but only to be rudely awakened about midnight by a loud shriek, and directly after every

"The savages are come!"

JUST as the Bulgarian atrocities are fading from view, comes the report of almost similar horrors from the United States of Colombia, in South America. At Cali, a town containing some 20,000 inhabitants, an insurrection broke out on the 18th December, and the Conservatives held the place for six days. On the seventh day, however, General David Pena, at the head of the Liberal troops, retook the town, and a most awful scene of carnage and outrage ensued. Two thousand five hundred men were killed; women were hunted from house to house, and shamelessly outraged; Dr. Borrero, an old man of 90, blind and helpless, yet who had been one of the first Presidents of the Colombia Convention, was mercilessly shot down; and the churches were filled with the dead bodies of defenceless victims. There is a great deal of English capital invested in mines and other speculations in these South American States, but the incessant revolutions which take place render all kinds of property unsafe, and almost worthless. The people are as volcanic as the mountains near which they live. They care nothing for human life, and a revolution is always regarded as a legitimate kind of amusement when trade is dull, or when they want a holiday.

At the late Spiritualist Conference one of the gentlemen present expressed his opinion that spiritualism did not improve the morality of its believers. He had noticed several instances of "moral obliquity" amongst advanced spiritualists; and he knew an individual who told him that he was perfectly prepared to die, when he had just before swindled a fellow-creature out of £50. Mr. Joy did not add whether the swindling was effected "by palmistry or otherwise," so that it is not likely there will be a prosecution, either under the Vagrant Act or directly for fraud. Besides, the dying man might have intended to repay the sum at some future time in a "materialized form," although it would seem that even after death spirits do not abandon their swindling propensities. When Artemus Ward asked payment of ten dollars from the ghost of his late partner, that dishonest but ethereal personage answered

"No," with, as Artemus says, one of the most tremendous knocks he ever heard.

The Duchess of Cleveland's jewels were stolen from Battle Abbey in the usual way—namely, by means of a ladder raised to the bed-room window, while the family were at dinner. It is manifest, from the straightforward manner in which the thieves go to work, that these robberies are carried out on a systematic plan, all the details being carefully arranged beforehand. One thing is certain, either the servants are tampered with, or some of them are accomplices, otherwise it would be next to impossible for the thieves to obtain the exact information they invariably manage to secure. Do the police on these occasions trace the antecedents of the servants who have been engaged during the previous twelve months? Or—horrid thought!—is it possible that the information required by the thieves is furnished by some aristocratic blackleg, who helps to rob his fashionable acquaintances, and shares the plunder?

So Cleopatra's Needle is to be brought over in a cylinder—not in a "colander," as Mrs. Malaprop described it—in order to be set up on the Thames Embankment. I suppose Dr. Dixon, who has devised this method of transit, is perfectly right in his calculations; but what if his cylinder won't float, and the famous obelisk goes to the bottom of the Mediterranean? We shall not only lose the "Needle," but we shall have to get up a national subscription to recoup Mr. Erasmus Wilson for the loss of his £10,000. Still, if it should arrive safely, we should all be proud of it, notwithstanding that the Government has left the task of bringing it over to the enterprise of a private individual.

A young gentleman, "short, dark, and with a small moustache," is doing a lucrative business in Mayfair. He presents himself at the door of aristocratic mansions "to be let," with "a card to view," and is particularly desirous of looking over every room in the house. A victim writes to say that, after a visit from this curious but enterprising gentleman, a gold watch and chain and a gold brooch were missed, having been cleverly snatched up whilst the housemaid showed him the rooms. In going over the house, he admired the prospect from every window, but, now his designing tricks have been exposed, it is doubtful if his own prospects are quite as cheerful as they were before.

"Real American Crullers" are the latest importation from the other side of the herring-pond. They are rather greasy-looking, are snake-like in character, and, served up hot, at a penny each, by a neatly dressed damsel in a smart white cap, are said to be a somewhat insinuating dish.

"Revenge is sweet," says the poet, "especially to women," but it's a mean way of being malicious to spread a report that a tradesman has small-pox in his house. Such a report has been circulated respecting a large drapery establishment at Kensington, and it is to be hoped that the reward of £100,

which the proprietors have offered for the discovery of the evil-minded slanderer, will be the means of enabling the public to make his or her acquaintance—in a court of justice.

The sketch models for the Byron statue were so unsatisfactory that the committee, as my readers will recollect, declined to select any one of them. Some of them must have been very bad indeed, for the artists left them to their fate; and now it is publicly announced that if they are not fetched away at once they will be destroyed, as they only serve to occupy valuable space. To how many of our public statues and memorials could not the same remark be truthfully applied?

Among the valentines sent through the General Post-office on the 14th ult. were a pair of boots, a baby's powder-puff, a lady's wig, a sausage, a carrot, and a pig's tail—the latter evidently intended for a member of the new Chinese Embassy.

Here are the *Observer's* opinions on the question of temperance:—"Sir Henry Thompson delivered himself the other day, at a meeting of the National Temperance Association, of a learned and eloquent address on the evils, not of intemperance, but of what is commonly known as moderate drinking. Sir Henry Thompson does not venture to deny that, under exceptional but yet not unfrequent circumstances, alcohol acts as a very valuable stimulant. He is of opinion, however, that its habitual use, even in moderate doses, is injurious. He admits that a glass of wine at dinner or after dinner is a pleasant thing; but he holds that those who indulge even in this modest allowance are 'discounting the future,' and drawing bills upon their constitution which they will find it difficult to meet at maturity. Every time that we take a glass of sherry, we are in effect, Sir Henry invites us to believe, knocking an extra nail into our coffin; and the moral which he drew is that, as a mere matter of prudence, we ought all to become total abstainers. The only answer that can be made to this reasoning is that of the man who, when told that smoking was a slow poison, replied that he quite believed it, for that he had been a steady smoker for forty years. The simple fact is that we discount the future, more or less, in everything that we do. Whenever we keep late hours, or rise unduly early, or allow business cares to worry us, or eat more at dinner than the positive necessities of nature demand, or expose ourselves to rough and inclement weather, or smoke a cigar, or put an undue strain upon the blood-vessels of the neck and brain by getting into a temper, or even by shouting, we are in each such case, *pro tanto*, 'discounting the future.' The question is, what life would be worth if we were to live by rule—to rise with the lark, to go to bed with the sun, to avoid all care and anxiety, to preserve an equable temper, and to live on milk, vegetables, and water."

Summoned to the Westminster Police-court by a superintendent of Excise, a tobacconist, residing in Chelsea, was fined £5 for selling lemonade without a licence after ten o'clock at night. He was told

that he had rendered himself liable to a penalty of £20. This is refreshing; for it shows how thoroughly Government is determined to put down the sale of these maddening drinks. Who knows what a man might be guilty of after partaking of one of these gas-impregnated, fizzing, foaming draughts of sugared water? It is to these gaseous compounds, no doubt, that we owe burglarious and garotte attacks—perhaps murder. Several atrocities have of late been committed, perhaps arising from lemonade, and remained undiscovered. Fortunately, the great Excise has stepped in, and the sale of lemonade without a licence after ten o'clock at night is stopped; and very properly, otherwise we should have had daring men going so far as to sell ginger pop. The calm and peaceful night will henceforth be undisturbed by the explosions of corks; but how about the vendors of coffee in the stalls, and the sale of baked potatoes? These outrages must be put down.

During his stay in London, Prince Demidoff took a box at the Opera for the season; but although he paid a high price, he seldom made use of it. One night, however, he dropped in, but was refused admittance, on the ground that he was not in proper evening dress. The next day he sent his valet to the manager with a large trunk, containing several suits of clothes, and asked him to be good enough to select one in which the Prince would be able to obtain admission to the theatre. It is unnecessary to add that, in evening dress or not, his Highness was never refused admission again.

There was a ball the other evening at one of the mansions in a West-end square. Just before it wound up about a dozen cabs were drawn up at the front door. By accident, the night was fine; and one of the drivers, who had spoken to the footman, came back to his fellows and told them that all the guests lived in the neighbourhood, and there was little chance of their being wanted.

One of the drivers, however, was equal to the emergency. He borrowed a couple of umbrellas, and asked the footman to get him a pail of water for his horse. The water was brought, and just as the guests were coming out, cabby poured the water over the pavement, and on the tops of the two umbrellas. The ladies, believing it to be raining hard, called for cabs at any price; and it was only after they got inside that the trick was found out.

Now that winter has come, and ladies are looking forward to many a pleasant evening spent in the enjoyment of the dance, they often forget the attendant fatigue, until the exhaustion of the following day reminds them that every pleasure has its alloy. This fatigue is in great measure produced by the tight ligature or garter with which the stockings are fastened, hindering the free circulation of the blood. Medical men are unanimous in declaring the use of garters to be a most fruitful source of disease. Every lady desiring health and comfort should at once provide herself with a pair of the new patent stocking suspenders, made by Mr. Almond, of 9 and 10, Little Britain, London. The price is only 3s. per pair, or any draper, or post free for two extra stamps.

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER I.—A SOUTHERN LOVER.

KATE TOWNSEND'S life at home was not very pleasant, after the scene at Si Slocum's. Left motherless at an early age, and petted by her father when he was not out of humour in consequence of trade difficulties, Kate's fate would have been to become a spoiled child, had she been like other girls. But the natural sweetness of her disposition checked this; and, though gifted with plenty of decision and determination of purpose, which largely resembled obstinacy, she grew up into a sweet, loveable girl, idolized by her father as long as she did exactly that which he wished.

There had been several scenes at home, in which Mr. Townsend had unwisely tried to weaken Wallace Foster's hold upon his child's affection by vilifying him, and accusing him of being moved only by mercenary motives.

This failing, and the old man growing startled at his child's excitement—for Kate flushed up, grew angry, and defended her lover with great vehemence—Mr. Townsend tried cajolery, promising love, presents, everything woman could wish for.

This proved as great a failure as the other, for Kate had been thoroughly angered, and she looked upon all these attempts at bribery with a kind of contempt, the result of all being that at the end of every interview, Mr. Townsend told his child that she was the most wicked and disobedient girl that ever existed, and banged the door, leaving Kate in tears, but more determined than ever to remain faithful to her love.

It was not that Mr. Townsend had so intense a feeling of respect for Vasquez, but the idea had struck him that it would be a good match, when on many occasions the gentleman in question had displayed a great deal of reverent respect for Kate; and had she been easy to win, it is quite probable that the father would have opposed the match in the end. But as from the very first Kate had displayed an invincible dislike to her father's protégé, and had on more than one occasion refused to meet him at dinner, exasperation followed, grew on the opposition, and to the great delight of Vasquez culminated in a declaration from Mr. Townsend that, come what may, Kate should become Mrs. Vasquez, and he redoubled his confidence in the owner of that name.

In his more sane moments he was obliged to own that this confidence was somewhat blindly bestowed; but the old man was stubborn—he had been a speculator, almost a commercial gambler, for many years, and had found it pay. He had, as a rule, jumped at his conclusions; success had attended them; and so he jumped at this matrimonial speculation, refused to listen to the voice of reason, and persevered.

"Vasquez is a staunch, careful, commercial man," he said to himself. "Foster is a dreamy engineer, always fancying he could discover silver mines where there's nothing but grass and rock. She shall have Vasquez, and he will carry on the business when I grow too old, and there's an end of it."

That worthy came into his private room just as he made this declaration; and, after the execution of a

little business, Mr. Townsend carried out what he considered was a clever bit of diplomacy.

"Oh, by the way, Vasquez, there's a paper marked Marley and Co. in the right-hand pigeon-hole of my secretary in the study; will you go and copy out the figures upon it, and wait till I come out? I want to talk to you about it."

"Certainly," said Vasquez; "but you have not given me the key."

"Oh, no—I forgot," said Mr. Townsend; "Kate has it. You will find her in the drawing-room."

Vasquez smiled to himself at the transparency of the excuse to throw them together; and, hurrying off, he determined to make the best use he could of his time.

He found Kate sitting very sad and despondent in the drawing-room; and, making no mention whatever of the paper, he approached her with an air of the most profound respect.

Kate rose, flushed crimson, and stood facing him, frightened yet angry, and feeling that she was about to be called upon to show her devotion for Wallace Foster to the uttermost.

"Miss Townsend," said Vasquez, approaching and trying to take her hand, "I will not conceal from myself that, in spite of the love and adoration you know I have for you, my presence seems to give you pain."

She remained standing, angry, and her beautiful eyes seeming to flash arrows of indignation at him, but with no other effect than to make him come a little closer; and by a quick motion, before she was aware of his intention, he had possessed himself of her hand, thrown one arm round her, pressed her to his heart, and fastened his lips for a moment upon her burning cheek.

She uttered a cry of fear, and darted from him, to stand palpitating with indignation at arm's length—for he still retained her hand.

"You are angry with me," he said, smiling.

"How dare you insult me like this in my father's house?" she panted out at last.

"Your father sent me," said he, smiling. "And as to insult, you beautiful tyrant, the kiss of a man who loves you passionately is no insult."

"This is insufferable," cried Kate, trying to tear away her hand, but in vain. "Mr. Vasquez, I desire you will leave this room instantly."

"Kate, your anger makes you look more beautiful every moment," he cried, excitedly. "I am glad you are angry, for it only rivets your chains more tightly round me. My southern, eager way of wooing frightens you. Why should it? Is it not better than the cold, calculating advances of your New York lovers?"

"Mr. Vasquez, loose my hand," said Kate. "I will not listen to such language."

"Not from your intended husband, Kate?" he said softly; and, in spite of her efforts, he once more got his arm tightly round her. "Be still, foolish, fluttering little bird," he said, holding her; "any one would think that I was some cruel hawk holding a tender dove in his talons before rending away her life, instead of your chosen lover—the husband of your father's choice."

"If you have a spark of manliness in you, Mr. Vas-

quez, loose my hand, and leave me. You force me to the avowal that I love Mr. Foster, that I am his promised wife, and that I will not listen to your suit."

"Foolish child," he said, smiling; "why, that is all baby boy and girl love of the past. You love Mr. Foster, a man who knows not how to love. He would tire of you in a week, even if your father consented, which he never will, for he has given you to me. Now, listen, and give up this insensate struggling. It is against your Fate."

"Then I defy Fate," cried Kate, passionately, and she struggled hard to free herself, but in vain.

"Defy it as much as you like, little one; but Fate is very strong, and Fate decrees that you are to be my little wife, whom I shall worship with all the fervour of my southern blood. Come, come, darling, don't turn away those pretty, pouting lips. Think of your father. Why, it would break his heart if he knew that you went in opposition to his wishes."

As he spoke he tried again to press his lips to hers, but she struggled away, and now began to grow alarmed, for the daring of the man startled her.

Armed as he was with the father's wish that Kate should be his wife, he had now cast off all his former deference and respect, to assume the air of a conqueror dealing with a captive; and exerting his strength to retain his prisoner, he smiled at all her efforts to escape, and held her fast till, in a fit of passionate vexation, she felt her weakness, ceased to struggle, and burst into a fit of sobbing.

"There, there," he said, tenderly, "I knew you would not continue so cruel. Come, Kate, my darling, beautiful, queenly little wife. There, sit down, and we will talk about the future. Come—there. Now I can tell you again how I love and worship you, how you have for months past been my idol, and how your father means to crown my patience with so rich a gift."

As he spoke he drew her back to one of the couches, and literally forced her to sit beside him, while he held her firmly with both her hands in his.

"Mr. Vasquez," exclaimed Kate, at last.

"Don't speak, don't move," he exclaimed. "I could sit and gaze at your sweet face glowing with maiden modesty and indignation for ever. Listen, Kate—you must forget this boy, and in the warmer sunshine of the love I have for you, the effort will be easy. His was a chilly northern love, icy and cold; mine is of the sunny south, with its burning sun, before whose glow his icy forms of passion will melt away, disappear, and be forgotten. Let winter go, let it be spring now, my own, and let this spring of love ripen into a glowing summer. There—there, I knew I could bring you to listen to me. I frightened you at first, I was too rough and ardent; but forgive me, Kate, dearest, and in the future, no lover shall be more tender than I—no boy more passionate and adoring. For you are my queen, my life, my all."

Kate sat with every nerve attuned to fear, trembling, watching him as the bird he had pictured might gaze at the glowing eyes of the falcon in whose talons she was held.

She was compelled by his superior strength to listen to him, for she had soon found that she was helpless in his clutches. Every struggle had shown her that under that lithe, slight form were concealed mus-

cles as elastic and as strong as steel, and that every effort of hers was met by an increase of force which frightened her so that she could hardly retain command over herself, and refrain from shrieking for help.

What could papa mean by exposing her to such insults? He could not surely know this man, or he would never have sent him to her thus. What should she do?

These were some of the thoughts that flashed through her brain as she was held tightly to his side, and then a burning blush of indignant shame swept over face, brow, and neck, as she thought of Wallace Foster, and in her mental agony called upon him to come to her help. Then she started.

"You are silent, sweet one," he whispered; "you are no longer so hard and cruel to me. There, it is to be, so do not struggle. Perdition!"

He had drawn her in spite of her renewed struggles closer to him, and his hot, parching lips were about to be pressed upon hers, when in an agony of fear and indignation, the poor girl uttered a wild scream for help, when the door was thrown open, and Mickey, who could not have been very far away, entered the room.

"Did ye call, miss?" he said, coolly.

"Yes, Michael, stay here with me," cried Kate, running to his side. "Now show this man out."

"An' I will," said Mickey, quietly. "Now, Mr. Waskey, this way. Come along."

"You insolent scoundrel!" cried Vasquez, half mad with rage at the interruption. "Leave the room this instant."

"An' is it lave the room?" said Mickey. "Didn't ye hear the young mistress say that I was to show ye out?"

"I am here by your master's wish," roared Vasquez. "Leave the room, sir;" and he advanced upon Mickey threateningly.

"That's what you say," said Mickey, coolly; "but the young mistress says, out ye're to go. Now, thin, which is it to be—daintily by the door, or indaintly, wid yer clothes torn, out of the windy?"

"Dog!" roared Vasquez, thrusting his hand into his breast; for, in spite of his advance, Mickey had not seemed a bit alarmed, but advanced in turn till they were face to face—the one black and convulsed with passion, the other cool and smiling, as if in enjoyment of the chance for a scrimmage.

"Dog!" roared Vasquez.

"Ah, would yer!" said Mickey, seizing the hand that went into his breast. "Now ye're trying to get hold of a knife or pistol, are ye? and to an Oirish gentleman who wouldn't demean himself to sech things, so long as there was a bit of a stick left growing on the face of the airth. Now, then, out you go."

A fierce struggle was imminent, and Kate sank back half fainting on the sofa, when Vasquez drew his hand from his breast, thrust it back, felt in one pocket, then in another and another, turned of a sal-low pallor, and searched his pockets again, and then stood gazing straight before him—stood as if deep in thought.

"So ye can't find the dirthy weapon, can't ye," said Mickey, "or are ye ashamed to bring it out? There,

lave the house dacintly, avore I make ye acquainted with the fut of a Tralee man, bedad."

He advanced upon Vasquez to take him by the shoulder, but the intruder started from him, and clapped his hand to his forehead, muttering—

"Yes—in the office—and when Slocum was there. Perdition! he must have them now."

Then, without so much as a look at either Kate or Mickey, he darted from the room.

CHAPTER XI.—A BOUT OF FENCING.

VASQUEZ set off almost at a run for Mr. Townsend's place of business, passing and not seeing his employer on the road; and on reaching the office, he hurriedly ransacked his desk, and looked carefully about for the papers he had missed, but without avail.

"I must have them, at any cost," he exclaimed, going once more to his desk, and opening a small mahogany case which it contained; then, placing something in his breast pocket, he set off at a rapid rate for Si Slocum's.

"The vagabond must have found them," he muttered, scowling fiercely as he spoke. "Fool!—ass!—idiot! What could I have been thinking of, to carry them so carelessly?"

He was so much out of breath that, on nearing Si Slocum's house, he paused to recover himself, and as he did so he tried to form a plan of action; but he was too excited by the discovery of his loss, and the influence he felt it would have upon his prospects with Mr. Townsend's firm.

"It will be hard," he muttered, grinding his teeth, "if all my plans are spoiled by that one little slip. Once get her, I should be so much more in his confidence that I could handle the money as I pleased, and then—How could I have been such an idiot!"

He was growing more excited by thinking; and, feeling this, he determined to go on at once, face Si Slocum, and get the interview over.

So to this end he smoothed his rugged countenance, assumed an easy air, and walked up to the house.

He knocked, and the call was answered by Si himself, who stared with astonishment on seeing who was his visitor.

For Si had been thinking out his plans for the future in the West, and, oddly enough, just before Vasquez appeared at the door, had said to himself—

"Now, if my dismissal had happened in any other way whatever, I should have given that black don the credit of having caused it; but I guess I can't fix him with it anyhow."

For it never occurred to the frank backwoodsman that Kate's visits to his house could have been seen and reported on by Vasquez.

"Ah, Slocum," said Vasquez, holding out his hand, "how are you?"

"Want to see me, Mr. Vasquez?" said Si, taking no notice of the extended hand.

"Yes. I just came in for a chat, Slocum," said Vasquez, passing over the way in which his hand was refused; and walking carelessly in, he seated himself on the edge of the table, began swinging one leg, and took out and lit a cigarette.

"Yew're just in time, then," said Si, drily. "I

was just agoin' out. An' if yew'd waited another three or four days, I guess yew'd ha' been tew late altogether."

"Ah, yes. It was about that I came to speak to you," said Vasquez. "No, I've not been to see you much, Slocum. Our business transactions didn't bring us together in a friendly way."

"I guess yew're 'bout right there," said Si, taking his heavy whip from the table, and twisting the lash round the stock.

"And how about this row with Mr. Townsend, Slocum?" said Vasquez. "He tells me he has discharged you."

"Yes," said Si, quietly. "We had a row, and 'greed to cut one another's company."

"Well, I'm very sorry," said Vasquez, earnestly—"very sorry indeed."

"Air yew?" said Si, quietly.

"Very sorry," said Vasquez. "I know I've seemed hard and harsh, but in business matters one cannot always get on smoothly."

"Road's rough," said Si—"reg'lar corduroy."

"But," continued Vasquez, "when I heard of it from Mr. Townsend I was very sorry; for, I said to myself, 'Slocum's a rough diamond. He's a straightforward, honest fellow, though he's as rough as a grizzly bear.'"

"Thanky," said Si, drily.

"Now you know, Slocum, we can't afford to lose you up at the stores."

"Then I'm very sorry for yew," said Si; "for I shall have tew make yew a little poorer."

"Nonsense, man!" cried Vasquez. "You'll have to stay."

"Guess Mr. Townsend don't say so?" said Si.

"Well, no, he don't," said Vasquez. "But then, my good fellow, you must own that you behaved very foolishly. Now I ask you, between man and man, was it a sensible thing for you to let your wife encourage Miss Townsend here to meet a lover of whom her father did not approve?"

"Guess I'm not going to judge my wife's conduct 'fore strangers," said Si, sharply.

"Well, well," said Vasquez, "that's a sore point, of course, and I won't touch upon it. But look here, Slocum, don't you think it would be a graceful and manly act on your part if you begged Mr. Townsend's pardon?"

"What, when the old cuss struck me across the face?" said Si, excitedly.

"Look at the provocation, Slocum," said Vasquez—"an old man, too, as hot as pepper. Come, you are the younger man, so give in. Look here, let me act as medium—give me your message to Mr. Townsend that you regret what has passed, that you wish to stay on, and that the future shall make up for any shortcomings of the past."

"Stranger," said Si, going a little closer to Vasquez, "dew I look like a man as would say things he did not feel, to get back to a life he didn't like? I guess I don't. I've had enough of this nigger life, and I'm 'bout going to drop it, yew bet."

"Think better of it, Slocum. Come, I'll give you till to-morrow. Sleep on it, and then see."

"More I sleep on it, more I shall want to be off," said Si, quietly. "I reckon I'm much 'bliged to

you, Mr. Vasquez; but no, thanky—I'm pulling up stakes, and 'fore many days are over I shall be off."

"Into gaol," said Vasquez, between his teeth, "you smooth-spoken scoundrel, if Jake has not deceived me, and I can trust him. But I would not have taken all this trouble, and put myself into his power, if I had known that this thunder-clap was coming off."

Vasquez thought this, as he quietly lit another cigarette.

"Well, Slocum, as you will," he said, after a minute's pause, during which he puffed at his fresh cigarette. "I thought I'd see if I couldn't act the friend, and I've done it. You're sure you won't alter your mind?"

"Certain," said Si, quietly.

And he looked searchingly at his visitor, as if wondering whether the cloven hoof would not peep out somewhere.

"As you will," said Vasquez, getting off the table. "Well, we may as well part friends. But I shall see you again at the stores?"

"Oh, yes," said Si, "several times yet."

"Good day, then," said Vasquez.

"Good day," said Si; and they walked towards the door. "I'm rough," continued Si, "but it's my way; so thanky, Mr. Vasquez, for your good intentions, but I guess I'm 'bout off."

"Don't say another word, Slocum," said Vasquez, smiling, "I understand your feelings. That blow was, of course, too much to be borne."

Si nodded.

"Oh, by the way," said Vasquez, "I had nearly forgotten; and, as you are going away, it might slip my memory until it was too late. Weren't you at the stores the other evening—in the office—after I left?"

"Du yew mean Tuesday?" said Si.

"Yes—no—yes, I think it was Tuesday," said Vasquez. "Yes, it was."

"Oh, yes," said Si, "I was there, and saw you come out. I was putting away some lading orders."

"Ah, then you may have seen them," said Vasquez. "They were of very little consequence, but they would cost me some trouble to replace. I lost a little packet of papers."

"Did yew?" said Si, quietly.

"Yes," said Vasquez, "a little packet of odd memoranda. Trifles of no value, but, as I say, they would be useful to me. Did not see them, I suppose?"

"Yes, I guess I saw them," said Si, drily.

"Oh, I'm glad of that," said Vasquez; "but," he added, with a change in his voice that he could not conceal, "where did you see them?"

"Guess they laid on the floor," said Si; "and I picked 'em up, and put 'em on the desk."

"But you did not leave them there?" cried Vasquez.

"Guess I didn't," said Si.

"No, of course not," said Vasquez, biting at the end of his cigarette. "But—er—er—what did you do with them?"

"Guess I put 'em in the pocket of this jacket," said Si, quietly.

"Yes, of course—you naturally would," said Vasquez, smiling.

"Then I strung it up on that thar nail," said Si, pointing to the wall; "and thar it stayed two or three days, till I wanted the jacket again. I forgot them papers till then."

"How strange!" said Vasquez, smiling wearily.

"Last of all," said Si, coolly, "I put the jacket on again."

"And the papers were gone?" said Vasquez, in dismay.

Si did not answer for a few moments, during which short space Vasquez's teeth were set fast, to keep down his emotion; and he looked like a gambler waiting, on the tenter-hooks of suspense, to see the result of a throw upon which he had staked his all.

"No," said Si, at last; "them thar papers was quite safe in this pocket."

"Of course they would be," said Vasquez, taking a long breath. "In an honest house like this, they would be as safe as in the iron closet at the office."

"Yes," said Si, "I guess they would."

"I'm very glad they fell into your hands, honest Slocum," said Vasquez, smiling. "Some men would have cast them carelessly aside."

As he spoke, he held out his hand for the packet; while Si in his turn seated himself on the edge of the table, and swung one leg about.

"Will you give me the packet?" said Vasquez, in his smoothest tones.

"Guess I sha'n't," said Si, looking the other full in the face.

Vasquez started, and looked strange.

"Nonsense!" he said, gaily—"give me the packet?"

"Guess that packet ought to go into Mr. Townsend's hands," said Si, steadily.

"What!" roared Vasquez.

"I say, guess those papers ought to go to Mr. Townsend," said Si again.

"Do you know their contents?" hissed Vasquez between his teeth.

"Reckon I do, entirely; same as I do what was on that bit of blotting paper as flew off your desk into the yard."

Vasquez shrank back, looking aghast, his eyes half closed, and his teeth pressed firmly together as his entire manner changed; and glancing sharply round, his eyes then seemed to flash upon the breast of Si Slocum's jacket, as he said, in a low voice—

"Si Slocum, you'll hand over those papers?"

"Guess I sha'n't," said Si, quietly; "so yew needn't look ugly."

Vasquez gave one sharp look at door and window, and the next moment he stepped close to Si, with a revolver that he had snatched from his breast pointed at his head.

"Those papers, or you're a dead man," he hissed.

"Not yet," said Si, catching the ruffian's wrist in his own grasp, and, by a dexterous twist, forcing the revolver from his assailant's hand. "I reckon yew're a nice honest sort of a fellow—thar, keep back, or this six-shooter may go off," he continued, as Vasquez seemed about to spring upon him, but only to slink back from the mouth of the pistol. "Thar, go and sit down in that chair."

Vasquez seemed disposed to rebel; but the pistol was pointed at him, and he sulkily crossed the room.

As he did so, Si dexterously cocked the weapon.

"Guess," he said to himself, "I'll take the sting out of this, or he'll be doing some one a mischief."

And, as the thought flashed through his mind, he took the chambers out of the revolver, with their charges, and slipped the little round piece of metal into his pocket.

"Now, Mr. Vasquez," he said, "just a word with yew. I reckon I've got the whip-hand of you this time. Yew've let the cat out of the bag at last. So this is what your civil, smooth talk means, is it? I thought there was something at the bottom of it all. Wal, I guess yew're trapped, my coon; so you may cave in. Now, listen."

Vasquez looked at him savagely, as he sat nursing his sprained wrist, and muttering curses upon him the while.

"There," said Si, "yew needn't sit cursing and spitting like a mad panther. Yew've played, and yew're euchred. I aint got yewre papers."

"Not got them?" said Vasquez, staring.

"No," said Si. "I put 'em in other and safer hands. There, take your shooting iron, and put it away. It won't do yew no good to put a pill in me."

He handed the revolver to Vasquez, who snatched it from him joyfully, and thrust it quickly into his breast.

Then rising, with a malignant look on his face, he turned towards the door, but stopped short, with a diabolical grin taking its place; for three of the police entered the room, one of whom guarded the door, while the others advanced towards the two men.

A Journey across Africa.

COMMANDER CAMERON left England in November, 1872, and arrived at Zanzibar in January, 1873. Here he at once set about collecting the necessary retinue of porters to carry the cumbersome baggage which every African explorer must take with him as a means of paying his way.

As factotum he engaged Bombay, whose name is well known to the readers of the narratives of Speke and Stanley, but who seems to have sadly deteriorated in his later years. Cameron found him to be throughout quite untrustworthy—not positively malicious, but weak and dissipated, and almost devoid of anything like a feeling of loyalty.

He seems to have engaged himself because he had nothing better to do, and because an expedition like that of Cameron's afforded him a chance of varied indulgence. To this man Cameron entrusted the duty of enlisting the services of thirty askari, men who were to act as a sort of guard, keep the porters in order, and do any little fighting that might be necessary.

But Bombay evidently made no attempt at selection, and the askari, like the pagazi or porters, turned out in the main a cowardly set, the sweepings of Zanzibar. Cameron's good-nature and his confidence in Bombay prevented him from seeing this until it was too late to remedy it. As it was, they

hindered and hampered the expedition at every step, and Cameron had frequently to drive them before him.

Cameron took up his quarters in February at Bagamoyo. Here he had infinite trouble and annoyance in collecting and keeping together his men, preventing them from doing mischief, and getting stores and baggage in order. To get his men together he moved a stage farther on, where he was joined by Robert Moffat, a nephew of Livingstone, and grandson of the veteran Dr. Moffat.

When the expedition first started it numbered somewhere about two hundred and forty men, besides a few women and slaves attached to these, twenty-two donkeys, and three dogs. When, however, the two contingents of the expedition met again at Rehenneko, some distance on the other side of the Makata swamp, the number was considerably reduced.

Unyanyembé, about four hundred and fifty miles from the coast and one hundred and eighty miles from Ujiji, was reached in August, and there the fever-stricken leaders of the expedition found some of the comforts and care of which they stood so much in need. The Arab governor, as well as other Arabs of the place, treated Cameron and his comrades with the greatest kindness, gave them a large and substantial house to reside in, the same house which had previously been lent to Livingstone and Stanley, and during their long stay and prostration by fever paid them many attentions, so that sometimes, indeed, their hospitality was even embarrassing.

Commander Cameron gives an exceedingly graphic description of the condition and conduct of himself and Dillon and Murphy in the fever under which they laboured during nearly the whole of their stay at this place. Indeed, we do not remember having ever read so clear and satisfactory an account of the symptoms and results of this great enemy to efficient exploration in the tropics on the part of white men. The victim seems to be in a state of chronic delirium, of which, however, he is to some extent conscious, being able to rouse himself when stern circumstances demand the effort.

Cameron reorganized his party, which now numbered about one hundred, desertions making the number vary daily; and a final start was made, after various delays, on the 2nd of November. The route from Zanzibar to Ujiji is already so well known, through the narratives of Burton, Speke, and Stanley, that one would think not much could be added to our knowledge by a new traveller, whose purpose was to make all haste to Tanganyika. Fortunately, however, Cameron's delays were frequent, and he had thus many opportunities of gathering information about the country and the people. The route seems to be getting safer and safer every year, and more and more frequented; one inconvenient result, however, being that the expenses of travellers are largely increased.

At last, after many vexatious delays, caused mainly by the cowardice and laziness of his men, and in a very exhausted condition from fever and want of food, Cameron got his first sight of Lake Tanganyika on February 18, 1874. It had taken

him about a year to traverse between six hundred and seven hundred miles.

Cameron's first object after arriving at the lake was to obtain canoes for the purpose of circumnavigating and surveying it. After much chaffering and provoking delay, he obtained two boats, which, after some repairs and additions, answered his purpose.

With a timid and unmanageable crew, he sailed in the *Betsy and Pickle*, as he called his craft, down the east coast, crossed just before reaching the end of the lake, of which Livingstone has, however, left some information, and returned northwards along the west side. As well as the fears of his crew, the frequent storms, the unavoidable haste, and the nature of the shore—which his men compelled him to hug—would permit, he made a survey of the southern half of this interesting lake, a survey which may be regarded as approximately accurate.

Cameron reached Ujiji again on May 9, after a cruise in which he added greatly to our knowledge. He stayed at Kawelé for a fortnight, gathering what information he could about the Lualaba, the course of which he was now eager to trace, giving readings to the friendly and obliging Arabs from a collection of Suahili tales, and making what preparations were necessary for a journey to the region to the west of Tanganyika.

There were all the usual difficulties in making a start—stolen goods to replace, drunken men to collect from their debaucheries, boats to get ready; so that it was May 22nd before a start could be made to cross the lake. Cameron's immediate destination was Nyangwé, on the Lualaba, about one hundred and eighty miles west of the northern part of Tanganyika.

Cameron tediously made his way in a north-west direction through the picturesque, rugged, well-wooded and watered country in which Livingstone sojourned so long during his last journey. This is inhabited by various tribes, the chief of which is that of Manyema, in many respects superior to, and Cameron thinks quite distinct from, their neighbours.

They are confirmed cannibals, with well-made bodies, living in well-built houses arranged in neat villages, industrious but dangerous to travellers. In this region copper is largely worked, smelted, and formed into pieces of the shape of a St. Andrew's Cross, weighing several pounds. Iron ore is also found, and smelted in ingeniously constructed furnaces.

The great object being to get to Lake Sankorra, and sail down what he believed to be the Congo, he naturally got over the ground as quickly as possible. Nevertheless, he made many observations on the way; and fortunately for his readers, however undesirable for him, he was compelled to halt for a time at various places. He passed southwards through a fertile country, watered by innumerable streams, some running east and some west, for the watershed between the east and west flowing rivers is difficult to distinguish on what is really a table-land. Here also were deserted villages seen, becoming more and more frequent as Cameron proceeded southwards.

One village he passed contained houses neatly and

substantially built, of a high beehive shape, and with beautifully carved double doors. Cameron here missed some small article, and on mentioning the fact to the chief, the latter threw himself before the traveller in the most abject manner, beseeching him not to destroy the village.

When Cameron told him it was of no great consequence, he was utterly confounded at the white man's leniency, and could not sufficiently express his gratitude.

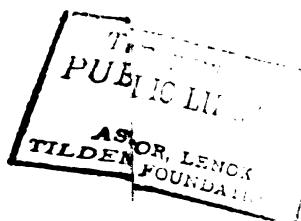
The only serious attempt at an attack was made at this part of the route, in the region known as Urúa, when Cameron found it necessary to barricade himself and party behind some huts. Happily the affair ended without any serious consequences. The reason of the attack referred to was that a Portuguese slaving caravan had been within five miles of the place, destroying villages, murdering men, and carrying off women and children as slaves. The natives, of course, naturally connected Cameron and his party with the slave hunters.

In October the expedition arrived at Kilemba, above two hundred miles south of Nyangwé, the capital of the extensive district of Urúa, the headquarters of its chief, Kasongo, and of a remarkable Arab trader, Jumah Amerikani, who has also a place on Tanganyika, a short distance to the south of Kawelé. This Arab trader seems altogether a wonderful production of Africa, and for his treatment of Cameron deserves the gratitude of all Englishmen. He has travelled much over Africa, is liberal-minded and intelligent, wealthy, and, to judge from Cameron's narrative, generous-hearted.

At this place, however, Cameron was detained for many months, waiting the caprice of the cruel and besotted chief, Kasongo, and of one of the most brutal specimens of humanity to be found even in Africa, Kendelé, a black Portuguese slaver from Bihé, near the West Coast.

What Cameron had to endure and witness while detained virtually a prisoner here is harrowing to read of. It reminds one of the reception given to Colonel Du Chaillé Long, who, when in a part more northerly, had to witness, when visiting one of these barbarous African chiefs, the decapitation of half a dozen poor wretches—head after head being swished off, and the blood bedewing the ground. The palace of these chiefs or kings is often only a mud wall, with a lean-to roof. Their followers are armed with muskets that must be as dangerous to themselves as to their enemies; but, all the same, they cultivate the fine arts, the king keeping his court musician, a nearly nude savage. The harp or lute of this black Apollo is a seven-stringed instrument, which he holds against his breast, and its music is, like that of the singer, enough to worry a nervous man into a worse fever than that which prevails in the neighbourhood.

Cameron was here compelled to abandon all idea of carrying out his scheme of reaching Lake Sankorra and sailing down its effluent, so that there was nothing left for him but to get as quickly to the coast as possible, especially as his supplies were rapidly getting finished and his health much shattered. But he was destined to remain at Kasongo's place till June, 1875, an unwilling witness of the horrible



SPORT IN NEW GUINEA.—(Page 19.)



cruelties of this, one of the darkest places of the earth. Village-burning, mutilation, and murder, not to mention all sorts of debauchery, were the daily amusement of the great chief and his slaving friends.

The reader can imagine how welcome a sight were the humane and civilized faces that met Cameron as he approached the Portuguese settlement. His difficulties and troubles, however, increased the nearer he came to his journey's end, and finally he and one or two of his followers had to make a rush for the coast.

To crown his misfortunes, scurvy attacked him at last, and he did not reach Benguella one day too soon to receive that medical treatment in which lay his only chance of life. The rest our readers are familiar with : Cameron's warm reception by the Portuguese authorities ; the "Cameron! My God!" of the British Consul at Loanda, when the traveller went to report himself from Zanzibar, "overland;" the shipping of his men to the East Coast, his return to England in April of last year, and the enthusiastic welcome he has since received. He has performed a feat which proves that the ancient spirit is not dead among us.

A Land of Wonders.

FOR a complete new world of wonders, commend me to that unexplored island, New Guinea.

It is only of late that any attempts of a serious nature have been made to explore it, principally on account of the savage nature of its inhabitants. An expedition was, however, fitted out from Sydney some little time back, and the visit was not without result. The voyagers, too, got back in safety, which was not the case with the members of a late exploring party.

It seems that the Papuans have a mortal fear and hatred of the whites, on account of the evil doings of kidnappers, who delude the savages into coming on board, and then take them away and sell them for slaves.

Blackbird-catching is the cant term for this nefarious trade, and it has resulted in deadly retaliations, by which many innocent people have suffered.

A Mr. O. C. Stone, of London, who is in search of curiosities in natural history, and Mr. Orkney, a Victorian pioneer, got under way from Somerset, and steered for the south-west coast of New Guinea, and brought up at the mouth of a large river hitherto unknown. The mouth of the river was one and a half miles wide, and the depth nine to twelve fathoms.

The coast line was low and swampy, with belts of mangrove fringing the beaches.

Entering the river, the steamer headed up stream for fifteen miles with plenty of water, and anchored at sunset. No natives were seen. On the following morning a party landed, and found native footprints and tracks of an animal, supposed to be a wild bear. Smoke rose from some distance inland. The river here was full half a mile wide, the banks, composed of pipe-clay, were twenty feet in height, and the depth of water averaged seven fathoms. Towards noon the steamer proceeded up stream.

The scenery is said to have been exquisite—groves of bamboo, tropical growth of various kinds, and

plenty of open forest country. Towards evening a canoe was seen ahead, paddled by a single native. The Papuan mariner seemed bewildered at the approaching steamer, and, rapidly urging his fragile vessel in-shore, jumped out, and was lost to sight. As the steamer proceeded, the river's banks became bolder, and the timber assumed a more formidable growth.

The river still continued wide and deep, and at intervals was fed by tributaries of such a size and appearance as to render it a matter for much discussion which stream to select.

Keeping on in what appeared to be the main course, a few miles more were steamed, when on the right bank a clearing of quite five acres was observed. A party landed, and gained the spot, finding a well-farmed plantation of yams, sugar-cane, and tobacco.

No natives were seen. The bamboos forming the fence were four inches in diameter, and had been cut with a strong, sharp instrument. Botanical and other specimens having been collected, the shore party returned on board, and the steamer again got under way, anchoring that night forty-four miles from the mouth of the river, at the junction of a second stream, as large as the main one, the depth being seven and a half fathoms, and the width one mile.

No signs of natives ; and on the next morning the steamer was again in motion, a stoppage made, and a boat's crew sent ashore. Plenty of fresh water was found, as also a second plantation of yams, tobacco, and sugar-cane. The up-river voyage was continued until the steamer had reached a distance of over ninety miles from the sea.

The crew, on landing at the farthest point, saw birds of paradise in immense flocks, and shot an enormous snake of the boa species, which was 15 ft. 6 in. in length, and, upon being opened, was found to contain a large animal of the kangaroo kind. A gigantic bird was startled by the report of the guns, and, on spreading its wings for flight, was computed to be from 15 ft. to 16 ft. across the wings. It was of an unknown species.

Time would not permit the captain of the steamer to longer remain away from his regular course, so the return journey was reluctantly made.

A steam launch was now got out, and an exploring party started up the Katow river, which at its mouth is about 200 yards wide. Mangroves line the bank for some miles, then give place to a beautiful kind of palm, which grows to a height of fifty feet. At the rear of this elegant river wall the dense forest, impenetrable, dark, and damp, continues unbroken, save where here and there a "clearing" has been made by some enterprising Papuan planter.

The river trip is described as having been magnificent, the day glorious, and the scene, on rounding bends opening on long reaches, grand. Trees, bright-plumaged birds, and insects, winged and creeping, of gorgeous shape and tint—all was novel and surpassingly beautiful.

But further navigation of the Katow was soon stopped. Huge trees lay in all directions across the river, and all efforts with axes and cross-cuts were futile, so the party had to turn back seawards. Though no natives were observed on the passage up,

it would seem the progress of the steam launch had been noted by the unseen blacks; for no sooner had the launch been headed down the stream than the most frightful yells and noises followed the party to the river's mouth.

It was evident the inland tribes meant to oppose the encroachment on their territorial rights, and, on the arrival of the party at a village, this turned out to be the case. Some days were wasted in making negotiations with the river men; and then, with the full consent of the latter, a second expedition started upstream, trading in the most friendly manner with the natives *en route*. Several crocodiles were shot. The reptiles abound in large numbers, and are of great size.

The natives about the northern coasts differ very much from their southern fellow-countrymen, being of a considerably lighter hue. They are of medium size, well made, and very active. Their hair is long and not woolly, and is fancifully dressed with feathers, coloured fibre, &c. The men wear a belt tightly drawn round below the waist, and the women a short skirt, *a la* ballet costume, which is most elaborately got up.

They are described as being a quiet, inoffensive people, using few arms, but given much to thieving. The women, unlike most females amongst savage nations, are the masters of the men. All chew the betel-nut and leaf, the use of which imparts a peculiar redness to the lips, and turns the teeth black. These tribes reside in clean villages, and seem to get on after a most amicable and comfortable fashion. Cookery is one of the great forte's of the people.

Some progress, too, has been made in pottery, and in the manufacture of cloths and nets from various fibres. Many kinds of handsome birds were obtained, including the goura and luceros. Birds of paradise were plentiful.

The inhabitants have found out the value of the gorgeous bird of paradise, for it finds a ready sale with dealers, and they generally have a stock on hand to offer to the sailors of a fresh ship.

Their way of obtaining these birds is ingenious, and is as follows:—

They wander through the vast forests till they find a tree which the birds frequent, generally some monstrous forest monarch, branching out in all directions, and the party climb this, and construct in convenient places a regular umbrella of leaves and branches, beneath which they can sit, and, out of sight of the birds, watch for their coming, when, through the holes left for the purpose, they shoot at their quarry with bows and arrows.

They are wonderfully expert with these arrows, and one man sitting astride a bough, or perched against the trunk, will bring down twenty or thirty in a day, the plan being an admirable one for preserving the gorgeous soft plumage.

Unfortunately for the naturalist, their way of preserving the bird is very clumsy, and consists in cutting off the wings and legs, roughly stuffing a portion of the skin with the breast feathers, taking out the head, and thrusting a stick up the neck into the place of the skull. Then all is bound together, rolled in a leaf, and hung up in their huts to dry.

The appearance of the country from where the ex-

ploring ship was at anchor seems to have been uniformly level, without a break for thirty miles. The mangrove and cocoa-nut palm struggled for supremacy on the coast line, while the interior presented the appearance of a densely timbered morass, but little above flood or sea level. On the drier spots the Papuans laid out plantations of bananas, yams, taro, sweet potatoes, sago, and tobacco. Bread-fruit and coco-nuts also abound.

The natives drain their plantations, fence them with bamboo, and otherwise display considerable agricultural knowledge. On going ashore the voyagers made a short incursion to the country farther inland, and were accompanied by troops of young Papuans, who evinced the greatest delight on the occasion, collecting all kinds of insects on the way, and handing them to the party.

The eternal mangrove is, of course, present, the coast forests being intersected by salt-water creeks. Here, in these fell miasmatic localities, the natives swarm. Inland a short distance are low ranges of well-timbered, but open, forest, showing the coral and gum trees.

From ten to fifteen miles inland the country becomes mountainous and rough, being backed by a chain of peaks of great altitude. Attempts were made to penetrate some distance inland, but failed; the dense jungle met with continually rendered such travelling quite impossible.

The Papuans are described as being well-made, powerful-looking fellows, literally black, and without the projecting jaws peculiar to the Australian aborigines. Woolly hair growing in tufts, and without a particle of clothing, marked with scars on the shoulders, and their ears split and cut into all kinds of fanciful shapes, and decorated with some bright feather, or other coloured material affixed thereto—such is the picture of the New Guinea man of to-day.

As usual with most savage tribes, the women do the whole of the work, their lords attending to the fishing, hunting, and fighting required from time to time. The "ladies" have a very scanty girdle round the loins, and when in full evening costume wear garters of gay-coloured feathers.

The implements of warfare are bows and arrows, which are described as being startling weapons of their kind, and capable of doing execution at 120 yards. The Papuans are great navigators, performing long voyages in large canoes made from the trunks of the coral tree.

Wild pigs form the staple article of animal food; the kava root is also indulged in, the natives being well versed in its uses. No indications of cannibalism were observed, nor could the explorers learn through the medium of the interpreters that the horrid practice was indulged in; at all events, on that portion of the island visited. At the same time, skulls formed common ornaments in connection with some of the houses.

WE note a ludicrous printer's error in an Oxfordshire contemporary, who makes a clergyman address a body of parishioners who have presented him with a handsome parting gift, as "My dear Fiends." The omission of the letter "r" converted friends into fiends—if it was an omission.

Three Hundred Virgins.**A TALE OF THE SOUTHERN SEAS.****CHAPTER XXXV.—ON GUARD.**

HAD Helston and Laurent been superintending, no better arrangements could have been made for the safety of the little tentless camp than had been planned by Grace Monroe.

For, feeling the possibility of the return of the party that had been chased away during the night, a well-armed party were told off to keep guard; while, before lying down, every woman provided herself with something or another in the shape of a weapon, ready to handle in case of emergency.

The canoes had been drawn up, as Mary said, right into a place of safety, though some of the women suggested that it would be better to leave them close to the water, so that the savages might take them; and Grace saw the force of this argument. But she also deemed that Helston would set a great value on the canoes as a means of prolonging their existence on the island, and perhaps for securing their retreat by communicating with a passing vessel; and therefore, in spite of the danger of having such fierce neighbours in their vicinity, she decided to keep them.

No sign of the fugitives had been seen by the scouting parties sent out, neither was there any trace of the flying party hovering about the island; so when, at last, all the preparations were made, such as were not to watch were told to lie down and rest.

One and all declared that they would not be able to sleep; but, in spite of this, before half an hour had gone by they were all sleeping soundly.

Mary Dance divided her time between seeing that her hospital patients were at ease and walking out to where, on the sands, Grace Monroe walked from sentry to sentry—these being doubled as the night grew older and became intensely dark.

It was a strange position for a delicately nurtured woman; but her life had been so full of adventure of late that this new position was accepted as the necessities of the case demanded; and Grace Monroe, like her companions, was ready to fight in the defence of the little party, even as, under abnormal circumstances, women had fought of old.

They kept a most faithful watch, the strength of which was directed towards the part where the savages had fled. At the same time, a good look-out was kept to sea and along the sands.

Every ripple of the tide was listened to with strained ears by those who imagined it might be the sound of paddles; every sigh of the night wind was interpreted into an inimical whisper.

But the hours glided on, and there was no alarm worthy of the name, till towards midnight, when, slowly and stealthily crawling along the earth—coming from the very direction where such an attack was not expected—the savages crept nearer and nearer.

They had chosen the lava, over the crust of which they cautiously approached, without making somuch as a rustle to announce their coming.

"There's nothing to fear to-night," said one drowsy girl to another, as she leaned upon the

spear that had that morning belonged to a savage warrior.

"The more need for careful watch over those who gave their life's blood for us this morning, Janet Hall," said a low, sweet voice.

"Oh, I'm keeping strict enough watch, Grace Monroe," said the girl; "but—oh!"

There was the sound of a blow; the poor girl uttered a shrill cry, and fell backwards, stunned by the blow of a club.

And then it was that the cry ran from mouth to mouth—

"The savages are come!"

As the girl fell, a dimly seen figure made a rush at Grace Monroe, who, in her fear, darted the spear she also held right at her assailant.

It took deadly effect, in a way she little expected; for the savage received it full in the throat, and fell to the ground with a gurgling cry.

On all sides, as Grace drew back her weapon, horrified at what she had done, there arose the sounds of strife, yells, fierce cries, shrieks from the women, and the noise of blows.

Then, before Grace could realize in her own mind what was best to be done, the sounds ceased.

What did it mean? Had the women been driven away?

The answer came in the hurried buzz of voices which directly arose.

"No, they did not get the canoes. Four men came, and we beat them off."

"Where's Grace Monroe?" said another voice.

"Here," she replied, stepping into their midst.

"We've beaten them off—we've beaten them off, the wretches!" cried half a dozen voices. "But where were you?"

"Who gave the alarm?" said another.

"Grace Monroe," said Mary Dance. "I knew her voice."

"You are not hurt, are you?" said another, anxiously.

"No," said Grace, faintly, "not in the least."

"What is it?" exclaimed Mary, hurrying to her side.

"Oh, don't ask me," groaned the poor girl, a woman in every feeling now that the excitement was over.

"Yes, yes—what is it?" cried Mary.

"I've—I've killed one of the savages," she whispered, with a shudder.

And, on a party of the women going cautiously in the indicated direction, they found that it was only too true; for the savage lay with his arms extended, quite dead.

Mary had remained with Grace, supporting her, for the poor girl was terribly upset; and at the end of a few minutes, after making quite sure of the death of the savage, several of the women returned to where Mary and Grace were standing.

"Is—is he dead?" whispered Grace, hoarsely.

"Yes," was the reply.

"Oh!"

Grace Monroe's exclamation was a long-drawn sigh, as she fainted right away, overcome by the horror of the thoughts which oppressed her.

"It seems to me," said one of the girls, drily,

"that if Deborah Burrows had had it all her own way, we should have turned out a precious poor lot in case of danger. I feel as sick as if I should faint directly."

"One oughtn't to say so," said another, "but I shouldn't like much of this work."

"We could have managed well enough, if there had been no attacks," said a fresh voice.

"Yes," said another; "but if one's going to take the lead, one must take it in everything. What shall we do if those men don't get well?"

"Are they so badly wounded?"

"Yes, so Mary Dance says. Oh, dear, I wish we were well out of this."

At this moment, in spite of Mary Dance's opposition, Helston came staggering out, to take part in repelling any fresh attack that might arise.

He was so weak, however, that he was compelled to sit down; and after a time, as there was no new alarm, he yielded to Mary's entreaties, and went back to his couch.

By this time Grace was thoroughly recovered, and ashamed of her weakness; but, sick at heart at what she felt to be a crime, she joined those who were on the watch, expecting at every moment that another attack might be made.

But the night passed without any fresh alarm, and so bright a morning dawned, that the terrors of the past were to a great extent forgotten.

CHAPTER XXXVI.—A FRESH HORROR.

HELSTON and his companions were far better in the morning than might have been expected. Their wounds were stiff and painful, but there was no fever; and the young doctor, after making the best arrangements he could as far as his own wounds were concerned, went the round of his patients.

Laurent was sitting up, waiting impatiently to be tended, and 'Thello was lying crying at his hard fate, and rolling his woolly head about in the sand.

"I fight for de whole party like ten thousand brave men, and kill nearly all de enemy, and den dey leave me to die ob my wounds."

"What's the matter, 'Thello?" said Helston, coming up.

"Oh, Mass' Helston, sah, I berry glad see you, sah. I got drefle pains in de head, and dey get worse. De savage hab 'plit my 'cull, and I sure I shall die."

"Nonsense," said Helston, laying a firm hand on the bandage.

"Oh, Mass' Helston, mind, mind! You kill poor nigger, sah. He berry bad."

"Nonsense, man! There, let me have oft this bandage."

"Oh, sah, you kill dis chile. You—you— Oh, mind de brains! I know de 'cull all 'plit."

"Now, look here, 'Thello. You fought yesterday like a brave man."

"Sah, I did—that I did!" cried 'Thello, with the big tears running down his cheeks. "But you find fault wid me, sah."

"Never mind about that now," said Helston. "Perhaps we'll talk about it another time, when you are well. But, as I was saying, you fought yesterday like a brave man."

"Yes, sah."

"To-day you are behaving like a child. Are you such a coward over your wounds?"

"No, sah; I no coward, sah. But look here, sah. Spose you get crack on de head from sabage's club, what you do if you know it break your 'cull, and de doctor want come and pull off de bandage, and you 'fraid to lose your brains?"

"Why, 'Thello," said Helston, laughing, "do you mean to tell me you are afraid that your skull is cracked?"

"I sure ob it, sah."

"Nonsense, man!"

"But 'tis, sah. I know well 'nuff. You not get de crack, I get de crack, and I feel him plain as plain. De great piece in him 'cull go creak, creak, like big double door in de wind."

"Nonsense, man; do you think the war club of any savage in creation would crack that skull of yours?"

"Sah," said 'Thello, in a tone of intense disgust, "dat drefle ole joke 'bout nigger 'cull being tick! It all nonsense, sah. Mine broke drefle, and if you no do somfin I soon die."

"Well, then, let me do something," said Helston, taking hold of the bandage, removing it, and strapping up the large cut upon poor 'Thello's forehead.

"You tink de bone grow agether again, sah?" he said, anxiously.

"Well—yes, 'Thello; I don't think there's any doubt about it, if you get up and make an effort. I should feel anxious about you if you gave way and lay there. It will heal more rapidly, and the bones of the skull assimilate at a far greater rate, if you enter upon some active work, and keep your brain busy."

"I tank you, sah," said 'Thello, as Helston finished his task of securing the bandage round the black's head, which, saving a formidable cut upon the brow, was as sound as ever. "I tank you, sah, and I hope you neber make joke again 'bout de tickness of nigger's head. I get up direckly, sah, and try do some cookin'."

'Thello did as he had promised, while Helston saw in turn to his patients—one and all of whom were doing well, and gratefully thanked him for his ministrations.

To his great joy, there was no wound amongst all that he saw to that threatened to prove serious, and though he had to sit down and rest several times during his round, he felt at the end far from exhausted, and ready to take a lively interest in the affairs of their little community.

Mary Dance, in a low voice, informed him that the dead savages, including the one slain that night, had all been buried deeply in the sand at low water mark, where the action of the tide increased the depth of sand at every flow.

"And their weapons?" asked Helston.

"All distributed amongst the women—twenty-nine spears and eighteen war-clubs," said Mary.

"The canoes?"

"Both safe, with their paddles," she said. "It was evident that the attack last night was to seize those boats."

"Yes," replied Helston, quietly. "And now, Mary,

about the future. I fear we shall have to guard against the attacks of these fugitives, and also to be on the watch for the coming of savages from some neighbouring island to make a fresh attack."

The next two days were spent in watchful care, to guard against the coming of enemies; and every night the sentries were doubled, but no alarms followed. Scouting parties went out by day, too; but still there were no alarms—not a sign, so far as they could see, existed of the fugitive savages.

Still there was the knowledge that they were there, and at any moment the hidden danger might spring out; so the guard had to be as strong as ever.

The savages had, however, received so sharp a lesson that they held aloof, having probably gone to the extreme north of the island; and for days and days they made no sign.

Meanwhile the wounded became rapidly convalescent, and, in the intervals of providing food, every effort was now made towards supplying the party with weapons.

Those they had taken from the savages were of course a great addition to the sharp-pointed stakes; and, for the present, Helston advocated the use of good heavy stones, slung at the end of a stout cotton cord of about eighteen inches in length, these proving to be formidable weapons in the hands of active women.

As soon, however, as it could be resumed, the exploration of the remains of the ship was continued, though now not without the precaution of a strong guard being always ready, and a good look-out being kept by those in camp.

The first day's digging in the hold of the ship rewarded the explorers with a quantity of iron, some of which was literally burned away; but a great deal was improved by the action of the lava fire.

It was iron in thin bands, intended for working up into barrel hoops; and its peculiar shape, when cut into lengths, fitted it admirably for the working into knives, spear heads, or swords.

The iron was naturally tough, but the fire had tempered it so that it more resembled steel; and for days to come, Thello, whose skull had according to his own ideas closed up, was busy at an improvised forge, where the fire was not yet cooled, working away, cutting the iron into lengths, and fashioning it into long knives or short swords, which, as fast as they were made, were laboriously ground to an edge by the women, sand thrown on the lava and sprinkled with sea water forming their grindstones.

It was a long task; but Helston and Laurent, ending their aid on this urgent duty, every day's close saw a number of women furnished with a serviceable weapon, and at the end of a week not one was left unequipped.

This being done, the next thing was to seek a better supply of food; and to this end some of the women were trained to the use of the canoes, which they soon learned to paddle, and by means of these the fishing parties, who went out some little distance, were able to get a much better supply of fish, and of larger kinds.

The mining at the ship's hull still went on, and as they went lower, and the rubbish was diligently cleared away, a cask was hit upon, and, after a

great deal of labour, loosened, so that a stave could be broken; when, to the great joy of Helston, it proved to be full of axes, evidently intended for the Australian market.

These were looked upon as a grand acquisition; and as the news spread of the find, the whole of the little community came flocking up, each woman eager to obtain and depart with a good, useful, bright, hard axe in her girdle, while directly after, a competition sprang up as to who should produce the keenest edge.

Further exploration laid bare bundles of spades, and other garden and farming tools, which had been placed at the bottom of the hold; while where the digging had gone on in another part, to his great joy, Helston found that they were the richer by several barrels of pork and beef.

There were great rejoicings in the little camp after these discoveries; and as Helston declared that they must act as if about to live on the island to the end of their lives, there were soon relays of working parties busy, with crowbars contrived out of some lengths of iron, chipping and loosening pieces of rock, which were carried by others to the place marked out as best for a large stone hut.

This soon began to grow into shape and strength, for in the necessary details Helston found an abundance of lime, ready made to hand by the volcanic action on the coral that abounded in one part, where the lava stream had made its escape into the sea. Then, sand was plentiful, and thus the hut was well cemented.

The difficulty seemed to be about the roof. This, however, was met by laboriously clearing away a great amount of sand and laying bare the remaining planks of the ship, many of which were completely charred; but there was an abundance left of half-burnt wood that answered admirably, and at the end of a month a capital hut was contrived, well roofed in; and a second, for the use of the men, well underway.

Still they saw no sign of the fugitive Indians, and the watch for them becoming very irksome, it was to a considerable degree slackened.

Helston and Laurent agreed that they must be in the northern part of the island, which must have suffered less from the volcanic eruption than the part where they were; and now he felt it to be a pity that they had not examined that part by exploration, previous to settling where they were.

Deborah seemed to have become a machine—working readily at whatever she was set to, and seeming to pay no heed to anybody.

"I am growing quite hopeful of her," said Helston one day to Mary Dance.

"Hopeful, sir—why?" was the response.

"On account of her behaviour—she is such an altered woman."

"Don't trust her, sir," said Mary, earnestly; "I don't believe she has changed in the least. She is only waiting to break out again."

"Nonsense," said Laurent. "What, another outbreak of strong-mindedism? No, my good girl, there's no fear of that."

"I meant of her madness," said Mary, quickly. "I hear her muttering terribly every now and then,

and I should not be at all surprised if she did something dreadful."

"You are getting unnerved, Mary," said Helston, laughing.

And soon after he started off to meet one of the scouting expeditions.

For these were carefully kept up, lest danger should come upon them unawares, Helston's argument being that danger always came when least expected.

The party he went to join had Grace Monroe for its leader; for she took a very active part in any of the daily duties, though Helston now seemed farther off from her than ever.

The afternoon was delicious; and, taking more notice of it than usual, Helston could not help thinking how wonderfully nature had repaired the devastations of the eruption, for the trees were green again, the undergrowth had sprung up wonderfully, and the grasses and bamboos were tall as ever.

He had not gone far before he met the scouting party returning, before their time.

They had news.

"What is it, Grace Monroe?" said he.

"There are traces of the Indians behind the hill, close to the mountain," said Grace, hastily; "they have had a fire there within the last few hours."

"Let us get back, and be in readiness," said Helston.

And, after a careful survey of the ground, they returned, and put the little camp on the alert.

Helston saw and said a few words to Deborah as they returned; but she only turned away, according to her custom, and he took no further notice, much as he blamed himself the following day for his want of foresight, after his knowledge of the woman's character.

That night all the sentries were doubled, and scouts placed in favourable positions in pairs—Helston, Laurent, and Thello taking the most exposed places.

But half the night passed without an alarm; and when it did come, it was from within the camp that it was first raised, instead of from the outside.

"I might have known that the cunning wretches would get by the scouts somehow," Helston muttered, hastily.

And, pulling his axe from his girdle, he ran back to where he had heard a cry and then a series of shrieks arise.

"What is it—where are they?" he exclaimed as he ran to a little knot of the women, evidently surrounding a wounded girl.

"Here she is, sir, here," cried half a dozen voices.

And bending down over the girl, he asked her where she was hurt.

"Hurt, sir?—not hurt," said the girl, who was half fainting. "I was on sentry with Grace Monroe."

"Yes," half shrieked Helston, turning to go.

"And Mary Wilmot was there too."

"Yes—speak! speak!" said Helston.

"I had only walked a dozen paces away, to get a better view of the sands, when I heard a sudden noise."

"Pray, speak quickly," panted Helston, who knew that something horrible was coming.

"I turned round suddenly," said the girl, hoarsely, "but it was not the Indians."

There was no word spoken, though the girl paused as if for a reply, and then, in a strange whisper, she said—

"Deborah Burrows had crushed her head with a stone!"

"Whose?" cried a dozen voices; but Helston's was not one of them. He knew what the girl would say, and she said it—

"Grace Monroe's."

The Egotist's Note-book.

A POOR woman has been picked up on Brighton beach, who says the fishermen threw her into the sea. It is, however, believed, from surrounding circumstances, that she attempted suicide by drowning, but her resolution failing her after the first plunge, she struggled ashore, until she sank exhausted where she was discovered in the morning. The newspaper paragraph goes on to say, "Her clothing and handkerchief were all marked 'H.,' but she had only threepence in her pocket." Well, and why not? "H.," of course, stood for "empty". If her linen had been marked "£ s. d.", and only threepence found in her pocket, it would have been reprehensible, and a gross attempt to deceive.

A man who, from his youth upwards, had been leading a most irregular life, suddenly ended his bachelor career by marrying a widow worth £40,000. "Don't imagine," said he to one of his friends, "that I am simply marrying for money. If she had had only £20,000, I should have married her just the same."

Ladies whose spouses are not dutiful are undoubtedly liable to be what the Americans call "riled." It is, of course, excusable then for them to give the said spouse a good talking to. More violent measures are objectionable, especially that of a lady by the odorous name of Rose, who has been held to bail for whipping her husband with a piece of iron gas-pipe, while on another occasion she went after him with a heavy iron shovel. There is no limit to the depth of a woman's affection, when she can love her lord with iron gas-pipe and heavy shovels.

Now that winter has come, and ladies are looking forward to many a pleasant evening spent in the enjoyment of the dance, they often forget the attendant fatigue, until the exhaustion of the following day reminds them that every pleasure has its alloy. This fatigue is in great measure produced by the tight ligature or garter with which the stockings are fastened, hindering the free circulation of the blood. Medical men are unanimous in declaring the use of garters to be a most fruitful source of disease. Every lady desiring health and comfort should at once provide herself with a pair of the new patent stocking suspenders, made by Mr. Almond, of 9 and 10, Little Britain, London. The price is only 3s. per pair, or any draper, or post free for two extra stamps.

A Scratched Camel.

"**A**H," said the Caïd, "the Lord of the Big Head is a terrible fellow."

"He is," said the old man of the tribe. "Allah preserve us from his wrath."

These words were said one evening in the camp, some little time after our misadventure with the lion, as related a short time since.

For I had taken to visiting the watchfires of the Kabyles pretty often of a night, for the sake of listening to the quaint stories they were so fond of telling.

"Few men," said the Caïd, "escape without coming into contact with him, more or less. I had a terrible adventure once."

"Try some of this tobacco," I said quietly, as I passed my pouch, and the Caïd very willingly filled the large bowl of his pipe.

There is no accounting for taste in pipes. That of my friend the Caïd had a large, open bowl, a tremendously long jasmine stem, and a mouth-piece of amber—so big that when I once, to oblige him, partook of a pipeful, I felt as if I was suffering all the time from an amber gag.

"Yes," said the Caïd, "it was amongst the mountains farther south, where I had been journeying for some days. The weather was very hot, and the sun and wind scorching. I did not feel it so much, however, for my burnouse was new, and the camel I rode magnificent. You like riding a good camel?" he said, interrogatively.

"No," I said, bluntly, for the Kabyles have a shrewd contempt for one who makes-believe; "it always makes me feel sick."

"Want of use," he said, pityingly. "To be mounted on a good bred camel with one low hump—an animal that goes like the whirlwind over the long stretches of sand—is glorious."

I had such a camel, and his speed was magnificent. He never seemed to tire, and we sped across the desert at our will.

I was mounted on Sayed, and as we went at a gentle pace through a rugged country, sprinkled with small palms, coarse grasses, and the prickly cactus, I held him back; for it struck me that at any moment an antelope might spring up, and as I had my gun, a piece wonderful in its truth, I hoped to carry back with me across the camel that which would make a splendid addition to our feast.

The only other arm I possessed was a long, keen, narrow-bladed knife, stuck in my girdle.

But that long-barrelled piece, it would carry a large bullet to a tremendous distance, and its killing powers were grand. I need hardly tell you that it was carefully loaded and primed, ready for the first head of game that should appear.

We were getting weary, my camel and I, towards evening, for our journey had been long and painful; but home was growing nearer, and we went on at a gentle pace, till suddenly a low, deep, echoing roar told me that there was a lion somewhere in the neighbourhood.

Sayed uttered a low sigh, and stopped short, as if to give me time to get ready my gun; but as the roar sounded away to the right, I urged him on,

when the roar was again heard, and this time from right in front.

Now, as the country rose up ruggedly on either ride, in a way that was quite impossible for a camel, there was nothing for it but to go steadily on, keeping a good look-out in the narrow ravine I had to traverse, and be ready to urge on the camel as soon as a clear road was open.

To have gone on fast now meant inviting any lurking lion to make a spring; while quiet progression, perhaps, meant sending the fierce animal away.

For, as you saw the other day, the lion at times will not stay to be hunted; he will even show respect to a traveller by hurrying out of his way so as not to alarm him.

So, encouraging Sayed, I went steadily on through the narrow way, which wound so about that I could see but a very short distance before me, and as short a distance behind.

Travelling at such times becomes terrible work; but I put my trust in Allah, held my gun ready, with its long barrel shining in the sun, and, keeping a sharp look-out to the right and left, I went on.

"It is a male lion," I said to myself, at last, "and he has been magnanimous. He has had respect to me and my tribe, and gone on."

I had hardly thought this, and determined to urge my course onward so as to get out of the narrow defile, when there was a loud, hollow roar from behind a clump of cactus, just a little in advance.

My camel stopped short, and began to heave itself about uneasily, and for a few moments I thought of turning back, only a moment's consideration told me that this was more dangerous than going forward, since, with my gun ready, I could fire at an advancing enemy. If I went backward, it was like inviting the lion to run along the rocks above me, and to spring upon my back.

It was not to be thought of; so I said a few words to my camel again, and tried to go on; but Sayed set its legs out widely, and uttered a strange noise, showing its fear of the danger that was before us. More than that—he tried to turn round once more, and run back.

"It is not to be thought of, Sayed," I exclaimed. "Go on, my son, and even yet the lion may let us pass on in peace."

The noise had ceased; so we proceeded again, with Sayed lifting his legs very cautiously, and more than once turning round his long neck, as if to see whether I was ready with my gun.

We got along for another fifty yards, and then I became aware that the wild beast we had heard was creeping along behind the plants and pieces of rock, so as to keep a little ahead of us.

Still I hoped that it would go off without our seeing it, my idea being that it was a male lion; but all hope was crushed down by the sight of a tawny skin some twenty yards ahead. Then Sayed stopped short, and I sat there, gazing at a great lioness which had leaped into the middle of the path, and now stood there, writhing her tail, showing her teeth, and with her eyes glowering at me furiously.

As I said, she was about twenty yards from me,

and presented a fine shot; but I was so taken by surprise that I forgot my gun, and sat looking at the great creature.

After gazing at us for a few moments, she sat down like a cat, and remained motionless, till Sayed turned his head, as if to ask me why I did not fire, when the lioness roused herself, took a couple of steps forward, and prepared to spring.

She looked now frightful, with her ears laid flat, her eyes half-closed, and her glistening white teeth apparently longing to stain themselves with blood.

At this moment my feeling of terror seemed to give way to a wish to act; and, half thinking that I should be too late, I raised my gun to my shoulder, said a few soothing words to Sayed so as to keep him quiet, and took careful aim at the lioness.

Before I could fire with any degree of certainty, she made a bound, and landed four yards nearer to me, crouching down for another spring. Fortunately Sayed stood firm, and I fired just as the beast was rising for a second spring; and then I prepared to bound out of my saddle, so as to avoid the onslaught of the wounded beast.

Judge of my surprise, then, as the smoke cleared off, to see the lioness lying upon her side, struggling with all the appearance of having received a fatal wound.

This being the case, I hastily reloaded, so as to give it a finishing shot; and I had just got my powder and bullet down, and the piece primed, when the monster gave a harsh, howling cry, and stretched itself out—dead.

I felt that I had made a wonderful shot, and could hardly believe it true; but there lay the lioness, and to fire again would have been a mere waste of powder and shot. So, urging Sayed forward, I went on to where the lioness lay, and was debating within myself from where I sat as to the possibility of taking off the skin for a trophy, and admiring the beautiful tawny coat, when there was a tremendous roar above me on the right, and I nearly let fall my gun as I saw, right above me, a monstrous male lion looking fiercely down at me, and lashing its tail as it set up its mane, and seemed to be asking me why I had slain its wife.

To retreat would have been madness; to hope for a second shot of so much good fortune, folly. All I could do was to take the best aim I could, and fire.

And this I did, just as the great beast was about to spring.

My shot took good effect, for it broke one of the monster's hind legs; and instead of making a clear bound from the rocks right upon me, it fell short, and rolled over.

"Quick, Sayed, quick!" I cried, trying to force the camel onward; but the poor creature was so frightened that it stood perfectly still, the valuable moment that would have placed us beyond the lion's power was gone, and it had struggled up, and thrown itself upon us.

As the lion bounded on to us, I threw myself back, but too late to escape; for the monster's claws were fixed on my leg and the camel's flank, making poor Sayed shriek with fear and pain, and sway so sideways that I expected he would go over and crush me beneath him.

Those were fearful moments, for, as the lion fixed its talons in my leg, and held on, it tried to climb higher, tearing poor Sayed's leg with his hind claw; but my shot had effectually crippled the other hind leg, and it could get no higher, only hung there, glowering at me, showing its teeth, and trying to reach my body, and fix me with his jaws.

I managed to get out my knife from my belt, for I had dropped my gun when the monster seized me, and as the beast struggled up, making jumps at me, I made a few feeble stabs at it, striking blindly, for I was sick with pain, as the lion's claws were literally tearing the flesh from the bone of my leg.

Just then Sayed reared its head, shrieked out as only a camel can shriek, and crouched down as if about to fall.

This gave the lion a chance to get a better hold; and, scrambling and tearing with its claws, it caused the poor camel such terrible pain that, in its fear and agony, it made a bound, shaking off the lion, which rolled over, and then, bleeding and torn, and with me clinging, half dead, to its saddle, it tore along at a tremendous rate.

I have some recollection of holding on to the saddle in a misty, dreamy way, and then of a terrible fall, after which I remember nothing till I seemed to awaken from sleep, and found myself lying in my tent.

I found then that poor Sayed had struggled nearly home, and then fallen exhausted in the sand—so near that my people had seen us coming, ran to my help, and bore me to my tent, where I lay for many weary weeks before I could again put foot to the ground.

As soon as I could relate what had befallen me, a party of our people went off, and found my gun lying across the lioness; but she was so torn by other beasts that the skin was useless.

They then tracked the lion, but lost all signs of him, learning afterwards, though, that a large lion, whose hind leg was broken, had been killed by the men of another tribe.

It was nearly six months before my leg was quite well. As for poor Sayed, he was never again fit for swift travelling—the claws of the Lord of the Big Head are so sharp and strong.

"Yes," said the old man of the tribe; "but he is a noble beast, if he is dealt with well."

"He objects to being shot, I suppose," I said, drily.

"Yes," said the old man, simply, "he hates it; but his wife—she knows the meaning of a gun by sight, and it is better, when a man is alone, to meet her unarmed, and to trust to her nobleness of soul, than to carry a gun."

"Perhaps so," I said; "but, as I might make as lucky a shot as the Caïd there, I would rather have my gun."

AN old gentleman who was living with his fourth wife, and who had always been noted for the ease with which he managed his spouses, on being asked to communicate his secret, replied, "It is the simplest thing in the world. If you want to manage a woman, just let have her own way in everything all the time."

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER XII.—THE BITER BIT.

"WHICH of you is Si Slocum?" said one, who proved to be the sergeant.

"I am," said Si, fearlessly.

"Then you are my prisoner," said the sergeant.

"Prisoner!" cried Si, raising his whip, but dropping it directly as the hands of the police went to their weapons. "Thar, I sha'n't resist," he said, frankly; "I've done nothing I'm ashamed of. It's a mistake."

"We shall see about that," said the sergeant, as Mr. Townsend entered the room, while Ruth and Jerry ran in from the other door.

"What's it all mean?" said Si, in a bewildered way, while his wife ran to his arms.

"Robbery," said Mr. Townsend, in an angry voice. "Search the house, constables."

"Oh, Mr. Townsend," said Si, "this is too bad. You know I wouldn't stoop to such a thing."

"Then, how is it that packages under your charge were broken open?" said Mr. Townsend. "You were just off from New York, too."

"Yes," said Si, stoutly, "I was. There, there, my gal," he continued, "don't you fret."

As he spoke he glanced at Vasquez, and saw such a look of gratified malice in his face, that he seemed to read on the instant the hand that had directed the blow.

Meanwhile, the constables were busily searching the place, the sergeant retaining Si in his custody.

"It's all a got-up thing," he said, contemptuously. "What have you lost, Mr. Townsend?"

"Lace, velvet and gloves, taken from a package," said Mr. Townsend, angrily. "They're here somewhere, constable."

"Well, guess you seem to know," said Si; "perhaps you put 'em here yourself."

"Insolent scoundrel!" exclaimed the choleric old man, who began to chafe at the ill-success of the searchers.

Meanwhile the exultant look on the face of Vasquez seemed to fade.

Had Jake failed him? If so, the plan had fallen terribly to the ground.

He caught Si Slocum's eye just then, and the trapper's seemed to say to him—

"Is this your doing?"

For the life of him, Vasquez could not help the exultant look from returning to his face; and he met Si Slocum's glance full, with a determined stare, till Mr. Townsend crossed the room, and touched him on the shoulder.

"I received an anonymous letter," said Mr. Townsend, "and came to ask your advice about it; but as you were not in the way, I determined to act for myself. I don't like anonymous letters; but, after the hints you threw out, I felt bound to do something."

"What did the anonymous letter say?" inquired Vasquez.

"Search Si Slocum's house for stolen goods, after seeing to your last consignment received into stores."

"Well?" said Vasquez.

"Several cases have been broken open," said Mr. Townsend, angrily, "and I have been terribly plundered."

"Indeed," said Vasquez, quietly. "Well, I'm not surprised."

And he darted a bitter look at Si, who was, however, too much taken up by the proceedings of the police to notice it.

"Guess dis chile knows 'bout what's a matter," said Jerry Blackburn, rubbing his hands down the sides of his trousers. "Guess dey can't find de tings dat ugly white-face cuss come an' hide. Guess dar be row if dis chile say um hide um again. Nebbah mind, I show um whar dey are."

Jerry was in the act of coming forward to make his confession, when the sergeant of police spoke, for his subordinates had returned to him.

"We've searched everywhere, sergeant," one said. "There's nothing to be found here, except there's a secret place built into the wall somewhere, or the floor-boards have been taken up and nailed down again. We should want a carpenter to help."

"Well, that must follow afterwards," said the sergeant, "unless the prisoner here likes to confess where he's hidden the booty."

"My husband has nothing to confess," said Ruth, passionately. "This is some plot."

"Always is, ma'am," said the sergeant, "when a man's found out."

"It's a shame, a cruel shame!" cried Ruth, with flashing eyes. "My husband's as honest as the day. Some enemy has done all this, and I believe he stands there."

She pointed to Vasquez, who scowled at her savagely, and, unable to bear her indignant gaze, turned away.

"Guess I no dar say word 'bout de tings," said Jerry to himself, "or I get Massa Si Slocum in wuss row if dey tink he 'teal um. Whatebber shall I do?"

"Well," said the sergeant, "have you any communication to make, prisoner?"

Si stood thinking for a moment, and then he turned to his wife, and whispered a few words of comfort.

"Don't yew take on, my gal. Reckon yew'd better go and tell Mr. Wallace Foster all about it, and ask him to come and have a talk to me. But hold hard a minute—I've got a card to play yet," he said, excitedly.

And he thrust Ruth back, as she clung to him.

"Now, are you ready?" said the sergeant. "You, Murray, stop behind, and watch the house. Nothing is to be disturbed until it has been better searched."

"Oh, lor," gasped Jerry, "dey'll come an' hunt de 'tables, and fin' de tings behind de com—"

"Stop!" said Si, boldly. "Yew want me to confess where the things air as I took from Mr. Townsend's?"

"To be sure," said the sergeant—"that'll shorten everything, even your sentence."

"Then I'll show you," said Si, stoutly.

"What does he mean?" muttered Vasquez, curiously gazing at the prisoner.

"A scoundrel!" said Mr. Townsend. "That's

always the way with these tremendously honest fellows."

"Si, what are you going to do?" whispered Ruth.
"Silence, woman!" thundered Mr. Townsend.

"Thar, don't make a noise about it," said Si. "But yew, sergeant, thar's a hammer and chisel in that thar drawer. Yes, that's right. Now, then, count nine boards from the wall, and lift the tenth. Yew'll find the things thar."

"The scoundrel took the bait famously, and hid it afterwards," muttered Vasquez, in delight. "Poor fool! they would have been found afterwards. Jake shall have another five dollars—perhaps."

One of the policemen went down on his knees, and, by means of the hammer and chisel, soon wrenched up the board, while Mrs. Slocum looked on in wonder.

"Guess he can't ha' conjured 'em in dar," said Jerry to himself, as he came forward, and stared at what was going on.

"What sort of a parcel is it?" said the policeman, as he drew the board aside, and showed the cob-webbed joists. "There's nothing here."

"Put your hand under the next board, constable," said Si, quietly, "and there you'll find it."

The policeman thrust his hand in up to the shoulder, and drew out a packet of papers.

"Is this it?" he said.

"That's it," said Si. "Stop that man," he roared, for Vasquez was making for the door, but was stayed by one of the constables. "That's it," said Si; "the packet I put thar only last night, when my wife, Rewth, was asleep. That's the packet, Mr. Townsend, as will show you that Master Vasquez there is a forger and a thief. I know nothing about your goods from the store."

"Dog!" roared Vasquez.

And, as Ruth uttered a fearful shriek, he drew a revolver from his pocket, presented it at Si's head, and drew the trigger, for an empty click to be the answer.

"Fire away," said Si, laughing, and without shrinking. "I thought yew'd be trying that game on agen, my friend, so guess I took out the chambers of that six-shooter, and put 'em in my pocket. Here they are, sergeant; yew'd better take care of 'em. I'm ready now."

He pitched the cylinder to the officer as he spoke; and Vasquez, finding himself baffled, made a dash for the window, but he was turned back by a fresh constable, who was standing there, while a couple more entered with Wallace Foster, the foremost of whom laid his hand upon the baffled scoundrel's shoulder, saying—

"Mr. Vasquez, I arrest you for forgery."

CHAPTER XIII.—JERRY'S EVIDENCE.

"FORGERY? Mr. Vasquez? Impossible!" exclaimed Mr. Townsend, who was completely staggered by the turn matters had taken. "This is some terrible mistake."

"No mistake, sir," said Wallace Foster; "I have a portion of the proofs, and Si Slocum there has the other. We divided them for safety."

"Sergeant's got mine," said Si, quietly.

"But it's impossible," exclaimed Mr. Townsend,

in a tone of incredulity. "I object to that reckless use of the revolver, but there was excuse for it on hearing such a charge. But, Vasquez, why don't you speak? Gentlemen, he is too indignant. This frightful charge astounds him. I will be bail for him, and he will soon sweep away the cobwebs of this diabolical plot invented by his enemies."

The old man darted an indignant glance at Wallace Foster, and scowled at Si, who seemed perfectly cool and collected; while Vasquez was grinding his teeth with rage, and so evidently watching for an avenue of escape, that, at a nod from their leader, two of the last arriving constables by a sudden movement caught his wrists, drew them together behind him, and before he had time to resist he was securely handcuffed.

"Now, Mr. Slocum," said the other sergeant, "are we to serve you the same, or will you come quietly?"

"Quiet as a mouse," said Si, laughing. "Guess the biter's bit this time, Mr. Townsend. You'll find it all out soon."

"Sergeant, this is an outrage on my friend, Mr. Vasquez. I tell you, I will be answerable for him."

"Very sorry, sir," said the officer; "but he's safe now. We'll let him stay so for the present."

"Ah, take care, he's dangerous," said Si, laughing.

"Silence, thief!" cried Mr. Townsend, in a rage.

"Guess, Mr. Townsend, you'll be sorry for this," said Si, hotly. "Yew struck me the other day, now yew call me thief. Now, I don't know what this all means 'bout your goods being stolen; but they never came into my house."

"Liar, now!" cried Mr. Townsend, who was beside himself at the indignity put upon his proposed son-in-law. "This is your honesty—too great to take a dollar more than was your due."

"I guess yew'll be sorry for this some day, old man," said Si. "Wal, say what yew like, yew're goods never come inside these walls."

"Yes, sah; yes, Mass' Si Slocum, sah," cried Jerry—"dey come in here, dis chile see 'em."

"What?" roared Si.

"There," cried Mr. Townsend, "even your own man bears witness against you."

"Yes, sah, here dey am," cried Jerry, bringing out the packages from under his arm. "Dis chile see um play hot bile beans an' butter wid em."

"What?" roared Si again.

"Sorter kinder ginger loafer come in at a winner," said Jerry, "an' I get under table, and he tick dis passle in de dror, and dis passle in de cupboard, and dis passle in de oder place, dah; and den, jus' as um going 'way, he hear de voice ob missis, and he cut into dah, like coon in a hole."

"And where were you, darkie?" said the sergeant.

"Dis coloured pusson was under de table, sah," said Jerry, pointing to the long cloth; "and den I came out, and take de missus rollum pin, and wait till de loafer come out ob de door dah, and den—"

"Well," said the sergeant, "go on."

For Jerry put the parcels on the table, and then stopped, bending himself double, rubbing his hands down his legs, and going through a violent series of contortions, all indicative of excess of mirth; while his mouth, with its broad thick lips, stretched out

right and left, displaying his white teeth to such an extent, that were the number of inches set down on paper it would be spoken of as an exaggeration.

"Come," cried the sergeant again—"go on."

And he and his men were evidently amused at the black's mirth.

"Wait minute, cons'ble," cried Jerry—"wait minute. Oh, lor! oh, lor! oh, lor!"

He went into a fresh series of contortions, and began stamping about the place, while even Si began to grin at the nigger's enjoyment of what had followed.

"Come, darkie, go on," said the sergeant, good-humouredly.

"Yes, sah, I go on," cried Jerry. "Well, sah, he come out ob de door, and den— Oh, lor! oh, lor! oh, lor!"

Here a fresh paroxysm of laughing seized him, and he went down on his knees, and held his ribs.

"Come, come, come," cried the sergeant; "and then you gave him topper?"

"Dat's him, sah—dat's him. Wiv—wiv—wiv—Oh, lor! oh, lor! oh, lor!"

"With the rolling pin?" said the sergeant, laughing.

"Dat's him, sah—dat's him, sah," cried Jerry. "I gib um such a topper wiv the rollum pin, I make um see 'tars, and tink a great 'torm comin' on. Den," he continued, with almost preternatural solemnity, "he cut um lucky out into de yard, and de dog Jack catch um by the tight part ob um trousis as um get ober de wall. Guess um no come shub de tings in our place 'gain."

"Well, what then?" said the sergeant.

"What den?" said Jerry. "Why, dis chile take de tings out ob place where he hide um, and take um into 'table, so he no know where to find um 'gain."

"And did Mr. Slocum know of this, or Mrs. Slocum?" said the sergeant.

"No, sah; dis chile keep um all to himself, sah," replied Jerry, with dignity.

"Regular plant," said one sergeant to the other.

"But who was the man?" said the sergeant.

"Nebber see um but once afore, sah," said Jerry, "and den he was talkin' to dis yaller genlum here."

He pointed to Vasquez, and showed all his teeth in one grin.

"And do you believe this contemptible, lame story, sergeant?" said Mr. Townsend, furiously; while Si sat down in a chair, took Ruth's hand, and laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks.

"Believe it, sir?" said the sergeant. "Oh, yes; it's true enough. That darkie couldn't invent a tale like that."

"Oh, him true as de gospel, sah," said Jerry, shaking his head. "Oh, him all true. You get de oder man, and feel um head; he got lump on it big as chickum's egg, whar de rollum pin come down. I hit berry hard, I 'sure you, sah."

"It was a clever plant, Mr. Townsend, but it failed," said the sergeant. "But there, all this will come out before the magistrate. Now, gentlemen, we'll be off, please."

"But, Vasquez," cried Mr. Townsend, "why are you silent under these disgraceful charges? In the name of heaven, why do you not speak?"

"Because the game's up, you old idiot," cried Vasquez, savagely. "There, take me out of this, constables, and get it over. As for you, Si Slocum," he hissed between his teeth, "this will be a two years' job, I expect. When it's over, look out. You've blasted my prospects, you've robbed me of a rich wife, you've brought me to a prison, and for this do you think I shall sit quietly down? No; recollect there's a man named Vasquez waiting for your blood, which he'll have to the very last drop, and then—then his revenge will not be at an end."

"What can you do then, you unmasked blood-sucker?" said Si, coolly.

"Do?" said Vasquez, with an evil grin. "Marry your widow, and torture her and your wretched spawn there to death."

As he spoke, he pointed to where little Freddie was gazing curiously in at the window, when Jack, who was by the boy, leaped in, and would have seized the man who threatened his young master by the throat.

A word from Si stopped him, and Vasquez was hurried away, Si's party following more leisurely, while Mr. Townsend staggered out last, looking broken and haggard, as if he had received a fatal stroke. In fact, he would have fallen but for Wallace Foster's arm, which supported him to the door. And Ruth Slocum was left alone with her boy to her tears.

CHAPTER XIV.—"TWO YEARS!"

THE trial followed quickly, and with the result that the evidence against Si Slocum was set aside instantly; for Vasquez, now that he knew he had lost, took up again the character of the desperado, and even seemed to glory in the black colours in which he showed.

Mr. Townsend took to his bed before the trial came on, and had a serious illness, from which he was only just recovering when he heard that Vasquez had been sentenced to two years' imprisonment, and that Si Slocum had gone, with all his belongings, none knew where.

"I'm sorry he has gone, Kate," said Mr. Townsend, feebly, as his child, who had tended him through his illness, hung over his chair. "I wish he had stayed, for I was unjust to him in some things, though he had no business to let you meet young Foster there."

"He did not know of it, papa, until after you did," said Kate, speaking demurely. "It was very wrong, papa, but it was all my fault."

"We were all wrong, my dear," said the old gentleman, sadly. "Well, well, we are none of us perfect. But you are not seeing young Foster now?"

"No, papa," said Kate, quietly, "I have not seen him since your illness. I felt bound not to see him, though he has been here every day."

"To inquire after my health, of course?" said the old man, drily.

"Yes, papa," said Kate, blushing.

"Ah," said the invalid, with a quaint smile, "he's very fond of me."

Kate blushed more deeply, and hung down her head.

"You're a good girl, Kate," he said, after a pause.

"And so you have not been seeing him since I was ill?"

"No, papa," said Kate, earnestly. "So long as I was relieved from the persecutions of that hateful man, I was content to wait."

"Ah!" sighed Mr. Townsend, "I was very foolish in trusting that scoundrel; but I am not the first man who has been deceived."

"He always seemed treacherous," said Kate, with a shudder.

"Ah, well, we shall never see him again," said Mr. Townsend.

"Indeed, I hope not, papa," cried Kate, excitedly; "but I always live in fear of seeing him enter the room again. He seems to influence my life; and I have a kind of dread that, sooner or later, he will cause us all some terrible anxiety."

"Silly, hysterical girl," said her father, smiling; "we shall never set eyes on Mr. Vasquez again. Ah, young Foster did me a good service in opening my eyes to that scoundrel's perfidy. He would have ruined me."

"Yes, papa; Wallace would give anything to serve you."

"Hush, you silly, enthusiastic child!" he said, firmly. "You are wrapped up in your fancy for this young fellow. You always love my enemies."

"Oh, papa!"

"Well—so you do, child," cried Mr. Townsend. "You half worshipped that rough trapper, Si Slocum, who would have strangled me one day, if his wife had not entered in the nick of time."

"Oh, but papa, that was in a fit of passion, when you had struck him."

"Well, there—there, child, never mind bygones. Si Slocum was an honest fellow and a true man, and I am sorry I ever misjudged him as I did. We may never meet again; but if we do, I mean to humbly ask his pardon."

"That's my own dear father," cried Kate, kissing him.

"That's my own cunning little Kate, coaxing me to be in favour of her love affair with young Foster."

"Oh, papa, indeed I was not thinking of that," cried the girl.

"Well, perhaps not," he said. "But look here, my dear. Wallace Foster must prove himself to be a man of substance before I can consent, for I've had several very heavy losses lately, and I shall very likely prove to be only a poor man, after all. Let's wait a couple of years, and see how matters turn. But you may be only a poor girl then, and Foster a rising man. He may not want to have a poor wife."

"Oh, papa, don't talk like that," cried the poor girl, turning pale. "I'd stake my life on Wallace's truth."

"Don't gamble with your affections, my dear, especially as you have no mother to guide you; and now do as I wish you, wait and see. If Foster works hard, rises, and when you become a poor girl—for I fear matters are going wrong with me, now I have no one on whom to lean for support, and I will venture on no other help, lest it should prove to be a rotten reed, like the last—I say when you become a poor girl, if Wallace Foster has been faithful and

true, and still wants you, I don't think I shall stand in your way."

"Oh, papa!" cried the girl, flinging her arms round him, and kissing him affectionately.

"There, there," he said, "now let's change the subject; for, though Wallace was the hero of Scotland, your Wallace is not the hero of New York."

Just then there was a knock at the door.

"Come in," cried Mr. Townsend.

Mickey Doran thrust in his rough head.

"Iv you plaize, sir, Misther Wallace Foster 'ud be glad to know how ye find yerself to-day."

"There," said Mr. Townsend, smiling, "you can go down, and tell him how I am yourself; but mind, my dear, I leave all to your discretion. Two years!" he whispered. "And mind this, let him know from time to time exactly how my affairs stand, and then we shall know exactly how the wind blows. Two years!"

"Yes, papa," said Kate, smiling—"two years."

"What'll it all mane about them two years?" said Mickey, scratching his ear, as he followed his young mistress down stairs. "Two years! I don't understand it at all, at all. Where'll we all be in two years, I should like to know?"

And then, descending the rest of the stairs, he said again—

"Two years!"

Elephant Catching.

PEOPLE are so accustomed to hear of elephant shooting, that it will sound novel to many when it is stated that they are often taken by the lasso.

Such, however, is the case; and here is the account of how the writer was present at an elephant hunt in India.

We were a large party, who started one morning, and, after a long round, we came upon the tracks of elephants.

Not a word was spoken, as we all followed as quickly and quietly as we could. The signs became fresher and fresher. At last we passed a creeper still swinging.

Instead of following in a long line, the mahouts now began to press up, and urged their elephants on as hard as they could without hitting. All seemed afraid to be left in the background. As we passed on, we could observe some grass that had been crushed down, still rising up, which showed the elephants could only be a very short distance ahead. The jungle was so thick that nothing could be seen. Soon we heard a crack of a branch being broken in front, and the same moment viewed two fine young females standing about a hundred yards off.

The moment they saw the leading elephants, they rushed off. When they turned, a fierce yell rent the air, and off we went pell-mell, the dull thud-thud of the clubs being quite deadened by the shouts and screams of the mahouts and drivers. As we broke into an open valley, we came in full view of the whole herd. Amongst them were two very fine tuskers, at the sight of which the mahouts became wild with excitement, and the drivers plied their clubs until the elephants roared with pain. There was a nice straight, open flat, and we were

gaining considerably. As we gained yard upon yard, excitement became intense; the men were now mad, and, by their unearthly yells and frantic gestures, looked like a parcel of maniacs or evil spirits.

A big tusker fell a little behind, and we thought we had him. For a second he seemed inclined to stop and fight; but just as the hunter had got alongside, and was preparing to throw his lasso, the tusker changed his mind and fled. We had now got close up; only a yard or two separated our leading elephant from the rear of the herd, but we could not lessen this distance. For three miles we went on in this way, when our elephants received a slight check. Two of the leading elephants fell simultaneously over a huge tree that had fallen down, and was concealed by the high grass. In the *détour* to avoid the fallen elephants we lost ground, and, to our disgust, the herd reached the foot of a steep hill, and began to ascend it about fifty yards ahead of us.

Once they got to this hill, only two chances remained for us—either that there might be a precipice on the other side and the wild elephants have to turn, or that the hill might only be a short spur, and some of our elephants get round it in time to head the herd. This was really the most tantalizing moment. The wild ones were only about sixty yards ahead, and seemed going quite slowly; yet, do what we could, they drew ahead, and we saw them all disappear over the brow, when we had still eighty or ninety yards of hill to climb. Before we got to the top the herd had disappeared, and we could only follow their track. As the herd was going in a mass, and in a straight direction, there was no actual delay; but having lost sight, our elephants seemed to lose spirit, and we could see we were losing ground.

We then turned home, with heavy hearts; but if we caught elephants every time we went after them, there would be no excitement.

The next day we turned out again. We had gone about two miles, when we came on perfectly fresh tracks; and, after following them for about five miles, we viewed a couple of elephants quietly browsing. With a yell, we rushed out, and the two wild ones fled for their lives, helter-skelter, pell-mell. On we went. We could see by the tracks that there was a large herd on ahead, but we never sighted them, the jungle was so thick. Now and then we could hear the trumpet of a wild elephant, or, when the jungle was extra thick, we could hear them crashing through it. At last we came on a small open, just in time to see the full herd cross over, and rush up the thickly wooded side of a steep hill. There were upwards of twenty elephants, some very large, and one a very fine tusker.

We were soon across the open, and alongside of the tail of the herd. A little one was noosed with great dexterity. When the little wretch began to bellow, the whole herd turned round, and came right down at us. One elephant was sent flying, but, being very active, never lost his footing; my elephant was knocked right over, but a thick sal tree just saved him from rolling down the hill. Two others did not fare so well, as they were sent clean

head over heels. The men on their backs escaped by a marvel; one clung on to the branch of a tree, but the others jumped off, and, like cats, lighted on their legs.

Blank ammunition was fired right in the faces of the great beasts as they came on; the wild ones heeded it not, but came on steadily. Our elephants advanced very pluckily; but as we met they saw at once they had no chance, and it was all the mahouts and drivers could do to prevent their bolting. As we met, the gooroo was just going to throw his lasso over one of the biggest of the wild ones, but the Rajah saw and stopped him; it was quite clear that we could not hold our own much longer, and if any lassos had been successfully thrown it would only have hampered us.

Although still keeping a bold front, we were gradually being beaten back. All our elephants kept close together, pressing against each other with their heads towards the wild ones, and the wild ones pushing against us. There were no rushes or violent shocks, it was all done sedately. The Rajah kept shouting to let the little one go; but his orders could not be heard. At last he took out his kookerie, and made signs to cut the rope. Just as he had done this, our left flank elephant gave way, stumbled, was nearly rolled over, and then turned tail and bolted; the others, one by one, did the same. The mahouts and drivers were lashing into them, but could not stop them. The hunter had understood the Rajah's signs, and was cutting the rope, when a big tusker came down on him, and knocked his elephant right over. The rope, luckily, was just cut as the elephant was knocked down, and the most of the wild ones ran round the now released little one. The big tusker, however, knelt down on the hunter's elephant, and was trying to gore him with his tusks.

All our elephants were now in full flight, but the Rajah managed to check his for a few seconds, and fired at the tusker with a little revolver. The bullets must have been to him the same as peas out of a pea-shooter, but they had the desired effect. He got up, and for a moment seemed stunned with astonishment. Our elephant took advantage of the temporary relief, and, getting up, ran away as well as he could. The hunter was soon on his back, and we all retreated a good deal quicker than we wished. The gooroo checked his elephant a little, and so did the Rajah, otherwise the hunter's elephant would have had a bad time of it, as he was quite lame and could not keep up with us. As we retired, the tusker and two others came after us, but the Rajah kept up a steady fire at them, and they did not follow us far. I must say I felt relieved when the tusker stood still and let us get away.

The next expedition, we had better success, for, after a long and silent journey, we came up with the herd on the other side of a swampy pond, where they had been refreshing themselves; and as I got within sight, it was to see one monster standing splashing in the water, with his trunk up, while others were lying down.

As soon as he saw us, he began trumpeting loudly.

We all started, and after going on for a few miles came up with the herd. We had been going through

a smooth, grassy glade, making no noise, and so got quite close to them before they saw us. We rushed in at them, and they tried to break back, and in the collision three little ones and two big ones were noosed. Most of our elephants were assisting in securing them; four or five had gone after the rest of the herd, and the gooroo and myself followed a splendid female. She went straight up the steep bank, and stopped at the top. The gooroo went after her at once, and outstripped us; he got alongside and found that she could not go on, as there was a sheer precipice on the other side.

He threw his noose with beautiful precision, and pulled it tight, before the wild one seemed to know what he was doing. The moment she felt the check, she rushed straight down the hill again. In her course she broke a sal tree; and whether the gooroo's elephant tripped over this it is impossible to say, but he did trip over something, and fell. The gooroo and his men both managed to jump off, but the poor elephant, a fine tusker, went head first down into the nulla. His tusks were buried up to the sockets. The wild one, however, never checked herself; she rushed straight on, and dragged the tame elephant clean over, breaking his neck and both fore-legs then and there. Before I could get up, she had dragged the lifeless body for fully three hundred yards. We, however, got alongside her, and soon had two more nooses on her, and secured her all right.

The party that went in pursuit of the rest of the herd overtook them, and secured a small male and a good-sized female; so we made a splendid haul. It was, however, no joke taking home four big elephants. The four little ones were carried away easily enough, but it was terrible work dragging the others; they fought every inch of the way, and tried every device to escape. We had gone about four miles, when we heard a shrill trumpet behind, and saw our enemy of the day before, the big tusker, coming down upon us. Our elephants began to fidget, and it was with difficulty the mahouts could keep them at their work. The captured elephants, hearing the trumpet of their friend, redoubled their efforts.

When he was about fifty yards off we gave him our four barrels into his head. He dropped on to his knees and trunk, but got up again at once, and turned half round in a stupefied manner. We got a clear shot at the side of his head, and fired again, and the noble old fellow rolled over dead. It seemed a great shame to kill him, but we could not help it; as, if he had once got in amongst us, he would have bowled over some of our elephants, some of the captured ones would have escaped, and very likely some of our people would have been killed. He was an enormous brute, larger than any of the Rajah's elephants, and he had some picked ones, which were considered very fine.

Before concluding, I may as well inform your readers how the elephants are tamed. The chief thing is never to let them sleep. Relays of men keep singing night and day. At first they commence with thin pliant sticks, about ten or twelve feet long, and as they sing they rub the elephant down. In a day or two they take shorter sticks,

until at last they touch him, and pat him with their hands. All this time they are singing, musical instruments are kept playing, drums are beaten, guns fired, and the poor animal is never allowed a moment's peace until he is quite tamed down. He is then taken by two keddah elephants alongside a tree, his neck and forelegs are tied securely to it, and a man, holding on to a branch, touches his back, and jumps up and down on it. If he ever puts up his trunk to try to pull the man off, he is beaten severely, chiefly on his trunk. When he allows a man to stand on his back without trying to shake him off, the man advances towards his head and neck, until at last the elephant allows him to rest on his neck without resistance. He is then led out by other elephants, with a pad on, until he goes quietly, and does not try to shake it off. When this is all done, he is taken out alone with a man on; and so on, until he is quite tamed. In three months he is fit for work.

Three Hundred Virgins.

A TALE OF THE SOUTHERN SEAS.

CHAPTER XXXVII.—IN QUEST.

AS soon as Helston could recover himself, he started off for the spot where the three girls had been together, Janet leading the way, trembling and sobbing; but her pace would not keep up with Helston's impatience, yearning to be at the side of her he loved; and as soon as he comprehended where it was, he set off at a rapid pace.

He was not half-way before he heard a terrible shriek, repeated again and again; and, running rapidly, it was to hear hoarse, guttural voices, which told him of fresh danger.

He did not hesitate, however, but rushed on, followed by the breathless girls.

Before he had gone much farther, the cries were repeated, and directly after he nearly stumbled over the prostrate form of her he sought, lying as she had been smitten down by the cruel hand of the mad-woman.

"My darling!" he groaned, stooping over her, and raising her head so that the pale beams of the moon fell upon the features.

"Who shrieked out?" cried the foremost of the girls behind.

"Here, quick," cried Helston, staggering to his feet again. "Poor girl! poor girl! It is—not Grace Monroe, but Mary Wilmot."

It was too true; for Deborah's hand had miscarried in its deadly stroke as far as her intention was concerned, the stone falling upon the head of one who had never given her the slightest offence.

"She is dead—quite dead," panted Helston, hoarsely. "Who will follow me? The Indians have carried off Grace and Deborah."

"I—I—I," chorused a dozen voices.

"Thanks," he cried. "You are all armed. One of you go back to camp for more strength, and follow us; we must rid the island of these wretches."

One of the girls was sent back, and the others set off with Helston at a rapid pace in the direction from which they had last heard the screams.

But it was a blind track to follow by night; and, after going some distance, they were compelled to stop, as they were as likely to be going in a wrong direction as a right, when a faint cry off to the left gave them a new idea of the route to follow.

"Press on," said Helston; "they are burdened with two resisting women; we must soon overtake them."

They ran on, then; but, before they had gone far, a faint cry was heard from quite another direction, and Helston felt, on the instant, that either he had mistaken the direction, or, what was probable, the savages had divided into two parties, each taking one of the prisoners.

His companions kept to him bravely; but Helston soon found that it was folly to look for help from those who were to follow from the camp, for it would be impossible for them to discover the way he had taken.

This was one of the hardest trials of all; and Helston felt now that he would sacrifice anything to have redeemed the past. It was a bitter error that depriving the savages of the means of leaving the island; for, had he but left one of the canoes on the sands, they would have fled the next day.

It was too late, though, now, and he pressed his hand upon his breast to keep down the agonized beatings of his heart as he thought of the horrors of poor Grace's situation.

He ran on, and his companions followed, till one by one they gave up, and he had only two at his side; and then he paused too, feeling as if he were fighting against fate in all this, for it was perfectly hopeless to proceed in the dark.

He had not heard a sound save that of their own footsteps for hours, and in the agony of his mind he had to recal, too, that one by one he had left behind his followers, one and all weak women, who unless supported by numbers would easily be overcome by the savages if they should meet.

"We must wait for daylight," he said at last, disconsolately, and with his head in a complete whirl with the terrible thoughts that oppressed him.

The day seemed as if it would never come; but at last the pale, pearly light appeared in the east, followed by a golden damask, fretted with orange and scarlet, and lastly the great sun rolled up, turning the grey and slatey shadows into verdant splendour. Every leaf and spray glittered as if hung with diamond and pearl; and, in spite of the blackened masses everywhere protruding, and the occasional gaunt skeleton of a tree, the island looked so beautiful that Helston, in his misery, asked himself why it should be cursed by the acts of man.

He reflected the next moment, though, that nature had her fits of angry passion, when the petty injuries of mankind seemed as nothing in comparison; and then, trying to drive hope into his weary brain, he took to reviewing his position.

He was here with two weary companions, the poor girls having both fallen into a deep sleep, and they lay there with their scanty garments soaked with dew.

To proceed with them alone was useless he knew, and only like leading them to their death, even if he succeeded in tracking the savages, which was

doubtful; for they would probably elude his search by hiding and doubling in amongst the ravines of the mountains for days.

His only chance of success was, he knew, and had to confess, though reluctantly, to go back to camp, gather together his forces, and then scour the country till Grace was saved, and the last savage captured.

"There will be no safety till the last savage has been killed," he said, moodily.

Then, rising painfully, he climbed on to a piece of rock, and stood with his hand shading his eyes, trying to make out where he had wandered to in the night.

This he was soon able to do, and then, rousing his sleeping companions, who were looking worn out and dejected, they started for the camp.

It was a long walk, for they had come far, and the two girls were footsore and weary. Their party was strengthened by a couple of those who had fallen behind on the previous night, and they arrived at last at the camp just as half the community had returned from a long, weary march to find them.

This was gratifying to Helston, as it showed the interest taken in their fate; and, on getting to Laurent, he found that he was preparing another expedition to start at once.

Helston bade him hurry his preparations, and to increase the numbers by all who had not been out searching, and as many of the tired ones as would volunteer to go.

"They must take the shorter cuts along by the shore, and can be brought back in the canoes, which can keep up with them close in shore, while those who are fresh can go with me right inland."

"But you will not be fit to go," said Laurent.

"Not fit?" said Helston, sharply, almost savagely. "Do you know that Grace Monroe is in the hands of those wretches?"

Laurent bowed his head, and said no more, but set about his task of preparation, 'Thello helping manfully, with the result that, in a couple of hours' time, a body of one hundred and fifty strong, active women were standing on the sands, well armed with knife and axe, and each carrying in a satchel slung over the shoulder a fair amount of provisions, balanced on the other side by a gourd of fresh spring water.

Helston prepared himself for his coming toil by plunging into the sea, and wading out, shaking himself afterwards as would a dog, and letting his canvas shirt and trousers dry in the sun.

Thus refreshed and ready, but with a wild, anxious look in his eye, he gave a few final orders to Mary Dance, who was left in charge of the camp, and, with the band divided into three, under the guidance of himself, Laurent, and the black, they started on their search for the two missing women, Mary Dance having promised due respect to the remains of poor Mary Wilmot.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—HOW IT HAPPENED.

GRACE MONROE had been seated, with Janet for her companion, at her post, which was just at the edge of the sands, when Mary Wilmot, one of the most pleasant and good-hearted of the girls, had

joined them, thinking, she said, that Grace would not mind.

"It's dull for you two here," she said; "and it's quite as dull in the hut. I'd rather stay here, and keep you company, if you'll let me."

Grace made no objection; and the three girls were seated there upon the sands, listening attentively for a time, and then conversing in a low voice of the beauty of the night, the stars on the waters, and the golden fringe of the breaking sea.

Sometimes they rose, to pace up and down a few dozen yards either way, but all was so calm and peaceful that keeping watch seemed to be a mockery.

"It seems that we might just as well be at the hut, lying down asleep," said Janet.

"No, I think not," said Mary Wilmot, with a shudder. "I don't feel comfortable to-night. It seems to me as if there is something going to happen."

"Stuff," said Janet; "if there was, you would not know anything about it."

"Do you think not?" said the girl. "I'm glad of that; because, though I know it's foolish to be afraid of shadows, I can't help feeling uneasy, and as if a dark shadow were looming over me. What's that?" she whispered, quickly.

"A piece of rock," said Grace, quietly, as the girl pointed seaward. "You are not well, Mary; your hand feels hot and feverish. You must let the doctor see you to-morrow."

"How coolly you talk about the doctor," said the girl, "as if we did not all know you worshipped him."

Grace Monroe made no reply, only rose and began to pace up and down slowly.

"She's offended because I said that," said Mary, quietly. "I did not mean to offend her or anybody. Surely it's no disgrace to love so true and handsome a fellow. Will she come back and sit down, Janet?"

"I don't know," said the girl addressed; "only you've touched upon a very tender place indeed."

"Poor thing," said Mary Wilmot. "I did not mean to hurt her feelings. I'll go and speak to her."

She rose and followed Grace, going up to her, and affectionately putting her arms round her waist as she whispered her apologies.

Grace's reply was to kiss her, and together they returned to sit, talking earnestly about their position, and the prospect of being rescued.

"I feel to-night," said Mary, "as if somehow it did not matter, for the dark shadow I spoke of seems to get darker."

"You had better go back to the hut at once," said Grace, decisively. "You are undoubtedly sickening for some complaint, and being out here in the night air must be bad for you."

"No—no—no, don't send me away," said the girl, earnestly. "It is nothing—indeed, it is nothing."

She was so importunate, and took it so seriously to heart, that Grace could not persuade her to go, and once more they resumed their conversation.

The night wore on with all peaceful and still; the stars glistened overhead as if each strove with the others to give a better light, and the crescent moon began slowly to rise out of the sea. Trouble or danger seemed far enough from them although so near, and at last Janet rose and began to walk up

and down, her footfalls unheard in the sand, and gradually increasing her distance at every turn.

"Do you feel, Grace Monroe, as if there were danger coming?" said Mary at last.

"No," said Grace, smiling; "not in the least. You foolish girl, you are full of fancies."

"Yes, I suppose I am," said the girl. "I'm very sleepy, too. I should like to sink into a long, long, restful sleep."

"Then sit still," said Grace. "I'll walk as far as the half-way mark to the next sentry, and then back, two or three times, after which I'll come and sit down again."

Mary Wilmot seemed half asleep, and she made no objection to her companion's proposition; so Grace slowly walked away for forty or fifty yards, and had got about half the distance, when she heard a dull noise as of a blow.

She waited, listening; but, hearing nothing further, she continued her walk to the end, and was returning when she heard a faint cry, followed by the rush of feet, and running up to where she had left Mary Wilmot, she just caught a glimpse of Janet running away.

She felt a strange, shrinking sensation as she drew near Mary, and was startled to see that she was lying down. Then her eyes lighted upon a ghastly sight, and she tottered away.

At that moment there was a hoarse cry, apparently from close at hand, and the sound of blows, with a fierce struggle.

Unnerved to a degree by what she had seen, and not knowing what this fresh struggle might portend, she turned to run after Janet, towards the camp, when a figure seemed to start up in her path, and the next moment she was struggling in the arms of a savage, who uttered a low, guttural cry, which brought another to his side, and, each seizing an arm, they began to hurry her hastily away.

Grace uttered cry after cry for help, but they were for the most part muffled by the hand of one of the savages; and, in spite of her resistance, she was forced almost into a run, to find, to her surprise, that there was another little party with a prisoner just ahead; and, after they had been hurried on for some time, she found herself face to face with Deborah Burrows, and read in her countenance who had done the horrible deed.

Up to this moment Deborah, who had been seized while running away from Mary Wilmot, had been only fierce, and had struggled boldly with her captors; but on seeing Grace Monroe's face by the pale light of the moon approaching hers, she uttered a wild shriek of dismay, held up her hands to keep the poor girl off, and acted throughout as if in the belief that this was a being of another sphere.

As her cries rang out, one of the savages seized her by the throat, and half strangled her, before catching her wrist, and going on again with hurried caution, as if they now believed themselves to be pursued.

Grace was hurried on after them, and on and on, hour after hour, till at daybreak she was roughly thrust down upon a piece of rock, some fruit thrown into her lap, and one of her savage captors made signs to her to eat.

She was too weary and sick at heart to eat; but for fear of angering those who had made her their prisoner, she placed a morsel or two in her mouth, and then her eyes wandered round the place where they were resting.

Deborah was within a couple of yards of where she sat, but kept her back to her; while the savages sat here and there on the rough blocks of lava.

For they had been travelling right towards the volcano, which now, in the dim morning light, seemed to tower up right above her head, emitting a dark cloud of smoke, which added to the obscurity of the scene.

They were in a great rift, where a huge mass of stone seemed to have been at some time rent asunder, for the walls, now some sixty feet apart, showed on their faces the indentations and prominences that had fitted together, while at either end the way seemed blocked with great masses of lava, completely shutting them in from observation on all sides, so that Grace asked herself was this to be her prison, and was it her fate to be shut up here at the will of her captors with Deborah?

As she asked herself that question, the horrible scene of Mary Wilmot's body, lying as she had seen it in the moonlight, rose before her eyes, and she shuddered as she thought of what would probably be her fate; and in her misery she wished that one of the savages before her would mercifully put an end to her existence.

Where can I get my Hair cut?

I SHOULD feel extremely grateful to any person who would tell me where I can get my hair cut.

At the present moment it looks like that of Mr. Alfred Tennyson, poetically unshorn.

Now, I don't like my hair poetically unshorn, for it does not become my cast of countenance; but then, what can I do, I am such a nervous man?

It fidgets and worries me when I go to my barber's to be shaven or cut, and wish to sink back in my chair to enjoy, in indolent repose, the snipping of the scissors and the lightening of my weary brain, to be tortured about all those hackneyed matters—the dandriff in my hair, the thinness on the crown, the threatened baldness, and the other curious facts that barbers can detect at a glance.

Why, thirty years ago one of the fraternity said that all my hair was coming off, and that if I did not use his Rumfus-something-or-another—I forgot the name—I should lose it for certain. And as I did not use his Rumfus-something-or-another, I, as a matter of course, shall lose it all, though it has not come off yet.

I never had the hardihood of the man in *Punch*, who said he liked dandriff in his hair, and that he liked his hair thin on the crown—I was always afraid. An irate barber might snip a piece off one's ear, or disfigure one's head, so that facetious friends would be making inquiries as to the number of months one had passed in gaol, and the quality of the skilly that had been supplied.

But it is very hard that I cannot get cropped or shaved without being pestered to try all sorts of po-

mades and creams that I don't want. These nostrums may be good, or they may not—I believe they are not; but, whether or no, let the barber display them for sale, and let people purchase them, and use them, if they like; but let it be optional, and not for an unwary person to enter a haircutter's shop, open his mouth to give an order, and have a bottle of lime juice and glycerine thrust down his throat.

I object—and when I say *I*, pray don't think me egotistical, for I am speaking *pro bono publico*, and as the voice of thousands—I object, I say, to the whole system of pretence and assumption that exists at these shops—I beg pardon, establishments. Time back, one had one's hair cut; now the custom has crept in of washing the head as well.

A nice, cleanly custom it is, at which no one can gird; but why, when I consent to the custom after being asked, cannot I have my head washed?

If I say so, the assistant looks at me with a patient, pitying smile.

"I can sell you a bottle of hairwash, if you like, sir; but we shampoo the head here."

So I am shampooed. Our Betsy, the nurse at home, always called it washing our heads, as children; and she did it with hot water, yellow soap that got in one's eyes, and plenty of rubbing. She never called it shampooing.

But here it is shampooing, though no honest bit of yellow soap does our assistant use. He pours a lot of liquid bosh out of a bottle on my head, calls it egg-julep, and rubs it into a juleptious froth upon my head; while, instead of rinsing it out with a sponge, and giving the head what Betsy called "slooch," he pours water out of what looks a small watering-pot with an india-rubber neck, half rubs me dry, and finishes off with a kind of cross between a sweep's brush and a Catherine-wheel, which he lets off over my head till my hair stands on end like that of an electrified boy.

Why, a short time ago I went into a place to get my hair cut, and I was frightened—a boy in buttons came and took away my umbrella, a man in a white blouse came and fetched my hat to iron it, and another man in a blouse took me into custody, and operated upon me before a marble basin.

I got away safely at last; but not until the man at the counter had made strenuous efforts to sell me a silver-gilt thimble, what time a waltz tune was played by a musical box that a severe individual wound up with a great deal of crickety-click from time to time.

There used to be a mild young man down my way, who had a modest shop and a modest manner. I looked upon that young man as a gem, and I went miles out of my way to let him cut and shave me, because he never so much as hinted at my wanting any trifle from the shop. He did his work cleverly and well, and gave me my change afterwards out of the pocket of his apron, where it jingled along with his comb and scissors.

Alas! I had to be absent for six months, and then I found that my modest young man had gone up. He had changed to a pretentious plate-glass shop across the road, where everything was new, from the house to the fittings, and everything smelt raw, and fresh, and painty. There was no more honest brushing of the hair with a pair of brushes, no more simple cut-

ting and shaving. The master had given up these duties himself, and handed them over to an assistant, and the money was taken afterwards by a young lady, seated at a counter.

You went in, and sat in a chair, indicative of execution; for an india-rubber halter hung above your head, while close at hand was a rack—of razors.

And then the hair-brushing! No ordinary revolving hair brush was that, with a machine upstairs that occasionally wanted oiling, in the person of a small boy who went to sleep. On the contrary, the machine was a machine—a real steam-engine that puffed, and panted, and uttered snorts. When my time for brushing came—scissors! We revolved at such a rate that my fancy for the moment was that I was on the wild “paraira” of the north-west, undergoing the process of scalping at the hands of a genuine Indian—the real red man of Fenimore Cooper.

I am glad to say that I escaped with my life, and the loss of only one shilling, there being no extra charge for the steam.

It was not steam which alarmed me on another occasion, but fire; an energetic young Irish assistant confidently assuring me that my hair was in a sadly neglected state, and required its decay arresting.

He assured me that the hair was a capillary “chube,” and that when in a weak state it was a bad plan to cut it, for it left the end of the capillary “chube” open, and the colouring-matter escaped.

In fact, after a long dissertation, he wanted to singe me, as if I had been a horse, and seemed quite annoyed, even hurt, because I declined the ardent test.

He seemed to suffer more on my account than his own; but he tried very hard to sell me a pair of ivory-backed brushes.

If this should meet the eyes of the bald, let me implore them not to murmur at the nakedness of the mental land, but take comfort, for the more bare their head, the greater their joy. I often fancy what must be the delights of the hairless man, who can tub and rub, and be independent of all such annoyances as fall to my share.

I often wonder what I should have been now if I had let the barbers work their wicked will upon me. I should have been cleaned—no, shampooed, dyed, and altered—till my dearest friend would not have known me. The dandriff would have been removed, my hair would have grown thick on the crown, I should have been regenerated, strengthened with tonic properties, revelled in lime juice and glycerine.

In short, I should have shone ambient, Hyperionized, glossy, and great; but, in my weakness and natural objection to advice, I declined, and walked in my own wicked ways.

Behold the consequence! I am a shaggy, rough-bearded, and long-haired man—poetical in aspect, but bearing a strong resemblance to the grizzly bear at the Far West.

Such is life! Still I think I have a shade of reason on my side, and that there was peace as well as pleasure with the man who used to say over his door, “Hair cut, 3d.”, and exhibited a barber’s pole in red and white, like a magnified peppermint stick.

But even he had his failings, for I have since believed that he had dealings with the hair merchant,

so tremendous was the harvest he reaped from my youthful poll.

I remember it all as well as possible, how the short hair-chips tickled in one’s neck and back, and how un-Absalom-like I looked while that war-lock tuft of hair that stood up at the crown obstinately refused to be brushed down, even as the notches at the side refused to be hid.

Ah, well—the longer one lives the more one finds out that there is no such thing as perfection even in cutting hair.

The Egotist's Note-book.

CARDINAL Cullen is a shrewd son of the Church. He refused to allow the remains of O’Mahoney, the Fenian head-centre, to lie in state in any of the Dublin churches, and generally threw a wet blanket on the proposed demonstration in honour of the deceased “patriot.” Rome never had much to say to unsuccessful pretenders, and Fenianism is dreadfully out of favour just now. O’Mahoney, says the Cardinal, was not a good benefactor to the Church, nor did he render any important or signal service to the country. He wasn’t at all to be compared with St. Patrick, Brian Boru, or O’Connell. Of course not, my lord Cardinal. Down with O’Mahoney, who wasn’t a benefactor to the Church! Brian Boru for ever!

Professor Fawcett and Sir Edmund Antrobus have been engaged in an animated newspaper discussion respecting the reasons which led the latter to retire from the representation of Wilton. Sir Edmund, who has represented the borough since 1855, explains that he resigned because the prospects of the session presented few inducements to him, and denies emphatically that he gave up his seat at the dictation of the Pembroke family, in order to make room for Mr. Sidney Herbert. Without committing myself to an opinion on either side, one thing is pretty certain—that Sir Edmund resigned precisely at the time that Mr. Sidney Herbert wished to enter Parliament.

That was a thoroughly ingenious idea to turn the title of “The Earl of Beaconsfield” into an anagram, and to find in friend Dizzy’s new cognomen “The Face of Old Ben.”

THE morality of the business world may be considered at a very low ebb, when almost directly a new article has been introduced, and is by universal consent considered a success, worthless imitations of it appear. These imitators trade upon the reputation gained by the original invention, and if not narrowly watched bring it into bad repute. Imitations are in existence of the “New Patent Stocking Suspender,” the only safeguard being the name of Almond stamped on every clasp and on the band. Every lady desiring health and comfort should provide herself with a pair of these useful articles, which may be obtained of Mr. H. J. Almond, 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, E.C. Ladies’ size, post free, 3s. 2d. per pair. Size of waist required.

Dogs and Dog-Fanciers.

BOOSH! Speaking as a matter-of-fact person, I say—bosh! Dogs are not such wonderfully trustful, faithful, truthful, intelligent creatures as some people try to make out.

One has read all the old stories about their fidelity and intelligence—how they save travellers from the snow, how they trace children who have been lost, or fetch them out of the water, while the writers make out that this is done by an intelligence almost human.

Once for all, I declare my conviction that this does not proceed from the heart, but from the stomach, as far as fidelity is concerned, while the rest is a mere matter of training.

No doubt I am an old hunk, as a lady once called me for kicking her dog because it bit my leg, but I have my feelings. In his way, I admire your useful sporting dog, pointer, or retriever, who brings back the buck that has been shot. I admire the fleet greyhound, and I think that dubbed Italian pretty; but I do object to a coarse, brutal fellow depriving his wife and children of the milk required for their health, because he wants it for the “bull poop;” and I object to men training themselves to look like bull-dogs, and imitating them in physiognomy.

But above all I object to a maiden lady, or a married one without children, petting and nursing some wretched little cur, leading it by a string when out, and carrying it about on a muff, telling it perhaps to “Kissy ma, dear.”

Pah! I should not like to profane the lips that had been touched by the dog.

But there, a truce to grumbling; I'll tell you a story about a dog.

Dick Canto was at my house one day, and I had been grumbling to him—I'm a splendid fellow for grumbling—when he said to me—

“But, my dear boy, all women are more or less weak.”

“More,” I said.

And—there, I confess it, a long course of ill-usage has made me timid—I looked over my shoulder to see if she heard me. She did not.

“You must take them as they are,” he said.

“That's what we do,” I said, bitterly; “but then we don't find out what they are till we have got them—what with their false hair, and paint, and—”

“You'll have your wife hear you directly,” he said.

Cowardice again. I jumped as soon as I heard his words, but she did not hear.

Now this arose out of Fido. I had been telling Dick my troubles, and he had listened attentively, and he said it had evidently been a “lark.”

There wasn't a doubt about it. I could see it all now plainly enough, blind as I was then. Somebody had done it out of spite, and here is how it happened.

We came back from a walk one afternoon, to find a dog upon the front steps, with a collar—quite new—and thin chain securing it to the door-scraper, and a parchment luggage-label tied thereon, bearing the legend—

“Be kind to him. His name is Fido.”

“Oh, how sad!” exclaimed my wife.

“Very,” I said.

For certainly it was about the dirtiest, most ill-reputable little beast you ever saw. It would be an insult to the curs to call it one. It was not a terrier, nor a spaniel, nor Skye, nor anything else but a dilapidated patchwork, that seemed to have been built up by Nature in a freak out of odd bits and scraps of little dogs, with about as mongrel a result as could be imagined.

“A poor little sweet,” said my wife again.

“Well, he doesn't smell so,” I replied.

“Oh! Algernon,” she exclaimed, “how can you be so brutal?”

That stopped me; for if my words were brutal, what would she have said to the act which I checked, since I was going to kick the little beast off the step?

“See the pretty little thing,” said my wife.

I did see it—give its wretched towey tail a few wet wags, every one of which painted a smear on the whitened step.

“It has been left by some poor suffering woman for us to cherish it,” said my wife.

“Yes, I'll cherish it,” I said, sardonically.

“You shall, Algernon,” said my wife, who is either obtuse, or else my satire is so deeply hidden that she never sees it.

Then if she didn't stoop down and pat the little wretch, and he came off all foul upon her pearl-grey gloves—the gloves I pay for—five shillings a pair, for she will have three buttons, and the best.

“Don't touch him,” I said.

“Why not?—a poor little—little sweet,” she exclaimed; “see how pleased he is—how his eye brightens. A neglected little darling.”

“He's so dirty,” I said.

“Yes, he shall be washed, he shall,” cried Myra. “How pathetic, Algernon! Only read—‘Be kind to him. His name is Fido.’”

“But you never mean to keep the beast,” I said, angrily.

“Algernon !”

You should have heard the tone in which that was uttered. If I had said another word I should have had her in hysterics all over the front railings, and that old cat Mrs. L'Espy next door swearing that I was ill-treating my wife again, as she set it about once before when Myra had hysterics about a white lustrestring dress which she wanted to wear at a party, and I said I could not afford it. To which she retorted—if I could not afford to keep a wife, why did I have one?

I made no reply then, for I always had the worst of such arguments, and I knew if I went into the matter I should have to buy the dress, so I fled. Myra had hysterics, and Mrs. L'Espy, next door, set it about that I was a brute, and everybody thinks I am.

There was nothing for it, then, but to stoop down and unfasten the chain, which I did, and then led the dreadful dog into the villa, where it was washed, bearing it patiently, in spite of the soap and soda, for it was fed all the time with pieces of cold chicken, which it devoured ravenously.

I had to wash that dog—with scented soap, and really it was necessary. Cook was told to do it,

and she gave warning on the spot. Sarah Ann was then summoned, and she turned red in the face, and said she did not know how to wash dogs. So Myra said, loftily, "Algernon, we will teach these people their duties;" ordered up a foot-pan, hot water, and soap, pinned a great cloth round her, and—made me do the washing.

I found out how hungry the little wretch was, for it made a grab at the soap, and ate a lump before it could be stopped. Then Myra had up the cold chicken and fed him, and I, making a virtue of necessity, washed him in three changes of water.

A word aside—Didn't I give it the little torment hot!

Then came the wiping.

No sooner had I lifted the creature out on to the towels prepared than it let itself off like a fire—I mean water—work, shaking itself so that the soapy water flew around in a fizzing shower, and Myra declared it was such fun, as she made a dab or two at it with a towel. I had all the wiping to do, though.

"Don't rub the poor little thing so hard, Algernon," said Myra, as I made it squeak; and I was obliged to modify my efforts till I had pretty well dried the little wretch, all but its tail, for it would wag that so, evidently feeling so tight and comfortable after its bath and feed.

This was the beginning of my troubles. I can't say the dog was not improved, for it was clean; but of all the animals I ever saw—there, I believe it was actually ashamed of itself, or else why did it always affect corners where it could hide—under the far end of the sofa, and beneath the bookcase, or our bed?

I believe Myra found out her mistake, but of course she would not own it. She only praised the dog the more, vowing it was the sweetest, most grateful little love that ever lived, when it would do nothing but eat, sleep, and howl dismally, especially in the night.

I never could make out, and I suppose I never shall, what that dog was for—why he was made. He seemed to be of no earthly use except to consume food, and the food did not want consuming. He ate savagely, in a hungry, wolfish way; and when he slept he was always dreaming uncomfortable dreams, which gave him spasms, though I honestly think the dreams he had were of his bath and the soap that got in his eyes; and certainly those weekly washings were not made pleasant for him. Still, I suppose he had a use; at all events, there he was, though I always wished he was not.

Fat? Yes, he did get fat, for my wife obeyed the label to the letter. We did take care of him, for his name was Fido, and Fido he was to his victuals. I grew nervous at last about his skin, for it seemed so tight, you could see it shining in amongst his hair, and he got to be at length like an over-ripe gooseberry in shape. I used to think to myself how unpleasant it would be if he did as over-ripe gooseberries will do sometimes; but say all I would, Myra paid it heed.

I suffered a canine martyrdom over that dog: I have had to go down in dressing-gown and slippers to soothe him, between one and three o'clock a.m.,

and I was obliged to soothe him Myra's way, with food. My way would have been to soothe him with a gentle flight out of the window. And so used to this soothing did Fido get, that, in his artfulness, he used to ask for it nightly.

Protest, request, behest, all were vain. Hysterics threatened, and I had to submit.

"No, Algernon," my wife said, through her tears, "when I saw that pathetic appeal I made a vow that I would be kind to poor Fido, and I will. I see how it is, you are jealous of him."

"No, my dear, not at all, not at all," I said; but it was of no avail: Myra settled in her own mind that I was jealous, so as I was to maintain the rôle of rival, I determined to have a rival's revenge.

It was easily done. I found out a bravo, and held with him a secret interview, where I developed my plans.

He was a gentleman who wore his hair cut very short, and drew a fur cap down right over his ears. He was dark-eyed and blue-chinned, and always chewed one end of a large neckerchief, which possibly contained starch, and thus supplied him with nutriment.

"Couldn't do it for ten bob, guv'nor," he said. "You see, I might get myself into trouble. They are very strict about such things now. I might try it for a quid, or I mightn't, don't you see?"

Well, I did see it; peace for a sovereign was after all not dear, for I would often have given a sovereign sooner than get up at two forty-five a.m. to go down and soothe Fido.

"A sovereign's a good deal," I said, by way of bargain.

"Why, some coves 'ud want twiced as much, guv'nor," he said. "S'pose I gets into trouble."

"Oh, you won't get into trouble," I said, encouragingly.

"I dunnow 'bout that," he said. "The bobbies is very down on me jest now."

"Well," I said, "if there should be anything arise out of it, I'd come forward and say I paid you to steal him."

"And what am I to do with him when I've took him, guv'nor?"

"Oh, what you like," I said—"sell him, and keep the money."

"Sell him!" he said, laughing as if his voice came through oat-chaff, "why, nobody wouldn't buy him."

"Then give him away," I said, sharply.

"Why, nobody wouldn't have him," he said. "He's the ugliest dawg I ever did set hyes on."

"Well, there," I said, impatiently, "you steal the dog, and as soon as it's gone, come to me, and I'll give you a sovereign."

"Fain larks, guv'nor."

"What?" I said.

"No shoving the perlice on to a fellow."

"There, go along," I said, "you may trust me."

And I went home, feeling happy.

The very next night, when I returned from the club to dinner, I found Myra in tears.

"Poor Fido's missing, Algernon," exclaimed she. "I made a vow to cherish him, and he's gone."

"You don't say so," I exclaimed, fingering a sovereign in my pocket.

"Yes, he's gone," she sobbed; "but don't stand staring there. Take this directly, and get it printed and posted up;" and she handed me a sheet of note paper, upon which I read something beginning "One guinea reward. Dog lost." Then followed a description of Fido.

"But dinner, my love," I said, in expostulatory tones.

"Don't talk to me of dinner," she exclaimed, indignantly.

And I had to go.

I found my short-haired friend round the corner; and he grinned, and I grinned. Then there was the passing of a coin of the realm, and we parted.

"Never mind," I said to myself. "The bills won't cost above five shillings, and the dog's gone."

They were stuck about next day, and Myra made pilgrimages to the butcher's, baker's, and grocer's, to ask them to exhibit bills in their windows, which, of course, they did; and in the evening, when I returned home, it was to find the gate besieged by boys with dogs secured by dirty pocket-handkerchiefs tied round their necks.

I had to send for the police at last, to get rid of them, for every young scoundrel insisted upon it that the dog brought answered the description of the advertisement exactly, and snivelled, and said I wanted to cheat him out of the reward.

There were so many applicants that the maids at last refused to answer the bell, and the neighbours all stood at their windows, looking on and enjoying the scene. So I had to go and confront the visitors myself; had rows with the dog-leaders; and ended by muffling the gate bell, and going into my study in a rage.

But Myra followed me.

"Are you sure, Algernon, that neither of the dogs was my darling Fido?" she said.

"Certain," I said, grumpily.

"Did you look at them all?"

"Yes, every one," I answered.

"There's the bell again," said Myra, as a muffled peal was rung: and she ran to the window.

"Let them ring," I said, sulkily.

"Oh, Algernon, dear," cried Myra, joyfully, "it's a woman, and she's got darling little Fido under her arm."

"The dev—"

I did not finish the word, I am glad to say. A cold, chilly feeling of horror came upon me, and a dread lest that dog was to be an instrument of torture for the rest of my days. In those few moments I had dark thoughts of a man, driven to desperation by want of sleep, climbing the parapet of a bridge and making a plunge; of a Christian wandering Jew seeking peace in far-off lands, pursued by recollections of a dog; and then I was brought to myself by the voice of my wife—

"Algernon, dear, have you a guinea about you?"

I had to pay it, and there was the dog the next moment eating as if he had been cut off from his supply of nutriment since he was stolen from his home.

Two pounds ten shillings did that little affair cost me, and I had to wash Fido into the bargain. That plan would not do. So I lay that night, cogitated and determined to get him lost by one of the maids.

She did it with pleasure; but he came back before the next reward bills were out. I could have had him stolen, but I felt that it only meant parting for a few hours, and two pounds ten a time would be costly; and all the time that dog used to lie and wink at me, as much as to say—

"I know what you are thinking about; but poison me if you dare!"

For I had thought of poison—the cold, killing, treacherous drug—and the dark thought was ever with me, but I dare not make it bear fruit. No, it was too much.

If any one would have stolen him in earnest, I would not have cared; but no one would, and I felt now that it would only be throwing money away. I consulted my friend, and he shrugged his shoulders; mine enemy, and he pitied me—more, he forgave me, and we mingled our tears. Then he whispered to me the dark word *poison*. But I am no Borgia; I shrank from the act, and was once more alone with my despair.

In the dark moods of my mind, I thought unheard-of atrocities to get rid of that dog. I grew at last hateful to myself, as I wondered at the vile state of my mental organism; but at last relief came.

I went down to breakfast one morning, to be greeted by our parlour-maid with a smile. She had not smiled for six months.

At the same moment I heard the housemaid humming as she dusted the hall; and directly after, the kitchen door opened, and there came up simultaneously the smell of fried bacon, and a burst of jubilant song uttered by the cook.

"What mean these sounds of rejoicing?" I said unto myself—"this metaphorical tabret and harp, this piping and timbreling in mine ears?"

Then I glanced towards Fido's wicker kennel.

It was empty.

There was a row in the house that day, but no one knew aught of Fido. Reward bills were out, and we were pestered with shoals of dogs, men, and boys, mingled; but I bore it all, for I had a presentiment that I should never see Fido more; but I did.

Mark, good reader, I don't say, "Alas! I did;" I merely say, "I did," and it was thusly:

I was smoking my morning pipe outside about a month later while the dustman was emptying our ash-bin, and cook was looking on, when suddenly I heard Dust-ho exclaim—

"Here, I aint a-going to take this here dawg."

I turned sharply round as cook said "Sh!" very softly, and I saw that her naturally perennially blushing face was scarlet.

I glanced up at the open window, and Myra was not there; so, with the customary decision of my character, I exclaimed—

"Why, you need not be so particular."

At the same moment a silver coin, value two shillings and sixpence sterling, shone in that man's dirty palm.

Then followed a rustle, a couple of pats of a shovel as some ashes were smoothed over something, a basket was hoisted on the man's shoulder, and that something was borne away and emptied into the cart outside.

My heart beat rapidly as I listened for Myra's step—but no, it did not pass the place; and then cook and I looked into each other's eyes, reading and re-reading the guilty secret.

"Bring me a light, cook," I said, "my pipe is out."

"Yes, sir," she exclaimed.

And that was the sweetest pipe I ever smoked.

That morning, as I stood at my flower stand, I heard these words—a fragment of a conversation carried on in a whisper between house, parlour, and cook-maids.

"And what did he say?"

"Told the man not to be 'tickler, but take it away."

"Then he must ha' knowed."

"Yes, and he give him a 'arf-crown."

"Lor!"

Listeners never hear any good of themselves; so I left the window, and went into the drawing-room, where, by some strange, sympathetic instinct, Myra was arranging the papers in her desk. As I entered, she handed me a parchment luggage-label, with a sigh.

"Look here, Algernon, darling. I have just found this—listen—'Be kind to him. His name is Fido.'"

For my part, I repeated the ejaculation of our housemaid, which she uttered when speaking to the best cook in England—

"Lor!"

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER XV.—AFTER A LAPSE.

YES, two years—the two years talked of by Mr. Townsend, his daughter, and by Wallace Foster with sorrow, and yet with hope.

These two years had glided away, bringing, as Mr. Townsend had feared, ruin to him; though Mickey Doran said he didn't care, for he'd been so used to ruin in ould Oireland that he rather liked a bit for a change, and so he should "shtay with the masther so long as there was a cowld pitaytee on the shelf," and when there was not he should not go.

So, in spite of all Mr. Townsend said to the contrary, Mickey stopped on, till servant after servant left, and his master and young mistress were in very humble apartments. He was a regular factotum, and when he had finished cooking, washing, and "claning," as he called it, he "claned" himself, and acted as Kate Townsend's body-guard.

"Well, after all, Miss Kate," he said, "cooks is not much account. Ye niver had a pitaytee cooked to such perfection as ye get it now, when yer fine plain cook was in your kitchen."

"Oh, Mickey," said Kate, "I was never half so happy in our grandest days as I am now."

"No, miss, I s'pose not; and there, ye needn't let yer purty cheeks turn the colour of the wather in the lough when the sun's a-setting. It's all because ye've got yer own throe love to come courting ye."

"How dare you, Michael!" cried Kate, flashing up.

"Hark at her! How dare I!" said Mickey, apos-

trophizing the walls; "and she calls me Michael, the crathur! Why, Miss Kate, darlin', I didn't mane to make ye look cross at me. It was only out of invy I said it."

"Envy?" said Kate, still frowning.

"Oh, my heart's bruk intirely, miss, if ye look like that!" said Mickey. "Don't let them pretty eyebrows all cockle up, and yer eyes flash swords and spears at a poor boy as is in throuble sore."

"You in trouble, Mickey? Why, you are always singing and dancing about the house."

"Sure an' ov coarse I am, Miss Kate. That's to kape down me feelings. Iv it wasn't for that, I should soon be a cowld stiff corpse at yer fate."

"Mickey!"

"Well, Miss Kate, darlin', and it's thru as the blessed saints."

"But what—what do you mean?"

"Sure, miss, I'm crossed in love, and that's why I envy ye."

"You crossed in love, Mickey?" cried Kate, colouring. "You in love, Mickey?"

"An' why not, sure?" said Mickey. "An' ye needn't think, bekase my cheeks don't turn rosy red like yer own, that I haven't got a heart as goes pity-pat, pity-pat, all the day long."

"And who's the lady, Mickey?" said Kate, now good-humouredly; for she felt that the honest fellow spoke to her in all sincerity, and never intended offence.

"Oh, the darlin'!" cried Mickey, rapturously; "an' I niver see her but once, and that was that unlucky day, Miss Kate, whin I came to warn ye at Si Slocum's that the masther was—"

"Hush, Mickey," said Kate, colouring again.

"Yes, hush and whish, and I don't know what beside. That's what my poor heart said as I see the darlin' on the sidewalk with Si Slocum's little boy at her side. Faith and she bored two great holes through my heart on the instant, and put a thread through, and she's been lading it about wid her ever since; for I belave I've no heart at all, and the bit of a broken thing as keeps on feebly bating is a mere nothing at all."

"Wait a bit, Mickey," said Kate, "and all things will turn out for the best."

"Ah, it's all very well for you, miss," cried Mickey, as a knock came at the door. "That's Masther Wallace Foster's knock, and now ye'll be as happy as two birds, while I shall go on ating my heart up wid invy."

"Why, Mickey, you said you had no heart," cried Kate, merrily.

"Did I, miss?" said Mickey.

"To be sure you did," cried Kate.

"Then it's all right, miss Kate," said Mickey. "I haven't a bit."

And he ran to open the door to Wallace Foster.

"Good news, Kate, darling," he cried, with such a loving embrace as would have satisfied the sternest father that poverty had made no difference in him.

"Good news!" she exclaimed, extricating herself with a blush from his fervid embrace.

"Yes, good news," he exclaimed in turn. "Why, my darling, you have had so much bad news and adversity of late that you seem astonished."

"But what is the news?" cried Kate, eagerly.

"This," he said, passing his arm round her to lead her to her father's room—"that after working like a slave for years, hardly able to keep my head above water, I believe I have found that which will make me wealthy, and my darling's husband."

"And that is—" said Kate, blushing more vividly.

"A silver mine, darling—a silver mine."

CHAPTER XVI.—RANDAN GULCH.

IT does not take long to make a town in the wild lands of Northern Mexico and upper California.

One day half a dozen rough, adventurous men—daring Indians, bears, storms, and the perils of drought and famine—come slowly pushing their way outward, far beyond the pale of civilization.

They have a couple of mules, perhaps, laden with the roughest of rough mining tools; each man has a revolver and a stout bowie knife in his belt; and, scorched by day, half frozen by night, they journey on and on through the wonderful land of rich soil, teeming with a semi-tropical foliage here, or climb the rugged, barren mountains there, where all is sterile, grand, and bare. Huge blocks, crusted with tiny dry moss, threaten to topple down upon their heads as they wearily work their way through some vast cañon or rift, where by a convulsion of nature the rock has been suddenly split in two; and if a rapid-rushing stream hurries through the bottom of this gloomy chasm, it is chosen probably by the party for their investigations.

Sometimes their way is over a scorching, sandy desert, where, may be, one or another gives up and dies of thirst, to be roughly interred by his companions in a shallow grave of sand, and left there for the coyotes or prairie wolves to scratch the body up for their hideous, ghoul-like banquet; and the next shuddering traveller who comes that way finds, scattered and whitened upon the burning sands, the unfortunate's bones, and watchfully examines his revolver, as he thinks that Indians are nigh.

And too often Indians are nigh, to come treacherously crawling down upon the traveller, overcome with a sleep from which he never awakes, for there is a tomahawk crashed into his brain, a knife is quickly passed round his head, and the dusky Indian warrior gives a shout of triumph as he wrenches the ghastly bleeding scalp trophy from his treacherously slain foe.

But with all the dangers of nature, of man, and of beast to encounter, the travellers plod on, chipping the rock here, removing the sand there, ever led on by the hope of coming upon some great find of one of the precious metals.

At last, probably on the banks of some mountain stream, gold is discovered in sufficient quantity to tempt them to stay.

They camp down, then mark out their claim, and begin to dig and wash, perhaps to be disappointed, perhaps to amass wealth.

But this cannot go on for long. They must have food when the meal-bag runs low. So one of the party is sent to the nearest settlement to buy provisions, and cautioned to keep his destination secret.

But he has to do with cunning men. His destination cannot be kept a secret. He is tracked

down, and in a few weeks the news has spread of a great find, and at Randan's Gully there soon arrive a dozen more parties, eager to set up claims and search for gold.

As they arrive, so does an enterprising Yankee, to set up a store, for the miners must eat and drink, and are glad to avoid the trouble of sending many days' journey in search of provisions.

But at the same time comes also the Yankee who sets up a drinking saloon—said saloon being an elegant architectural building, composed of fir poles, a few boards unplaned, and a bit of canvas, with graceful additions in the way of empty tubs, when a sufficiency have been arranged with planks.

Next, if not before, another elegant shed springs up. This is the gambling saloon, where euchre and poker are played night and day; for of course, if gold is dug liberally from the soil, those who gain it must gamble.

Then, in a very short time, to this new town flock the obscene birds that have found the more respectable places grow too hot to hold them.

Rows arising from gambling and drink become frequent. Some few men are slain in fair fight, more by cowardly disadvantage; and the necessity for a cemetery grows up, but it is not attended to, for the men are too busy digging when they are not at play, and there are always plenty of worn-out patches and claims, where the earth is loose and evenly dug.

Such had been the rise of Randan Gulch—a shambling collection of huts and booths on the banks of a gully in one of the most magnificent regions of the Far West.

Here the mountains towered up, clothed at their feet with foliage, while in the ravines and bottoms the rich earth teemed with emerald-hued grass.

Many years before, some Mexican half-breed had built his ranch or farmstead here; and innocent of the existence of the precious metals, but content with his herds, he had lived, and probably died, in a patriarchal manner.

For miles round the country was delicious in its changeful beauty, but it had no charms for the rowdy population, who sullied the bright air with their oaths and the fumes of bad whiskey and coarse tobacco.

The town had been named after the ruined ranch by the traders who flocked to the place, and now it was so far in advance that before long there was every probability of some enterprising Western editor starting his press, and beginning to issue, with a circulation of perhaps nearly a hundred copies per week, the *Randan Gulch Mercury and Gold Town Gazette*.

But matters had not yet gone so far.

It was one glorious day in July, when the whole earth seemed enveloped in a golden glory, over which hung suspended a heaven of the deepest turquoise blue, that a bronzed, stalwart man cantered up the one street of the town on a fiery mustang, whose great nostrils and thin, nervous ears seemed to be always at work.

The stranger wore a broad-leaved, soft sombrero, and was dressed in a half-Indian, half-Mexican

fashion, with his leather-fringed trousers, loose shirt, and gay sash.

In his belt were stuck those familiar weapons, the bowie knife and revolver; but there was a fearless aspect about the man, as he dashed up the street, which seemed to intimate that he was one whom it would be dangerous to irritate; and where he did not obtain scowls, he was favoured with a smile and nod of recognition.

He rode up to the entrance of the principal store, leaped down from his mustang, and, at a word, a rough-looking fellow came slouching out, watched the stranger as he unrolled the lariat, or hide cord, from his saddle-bow, and haltered the horse to one of the many pegs driven into the earth, and then stroked and patted the beast, which whinnied, and rubbed its nose in its master's hand.

"I reckon yew're taking plenty of trouble to skewer that thar mustang," said the man, "and he'll be all right; but if it was tew-night or tew-morrer night, and I wasn't watchin' of it, he'd soon be far enough from here."

"Look here, stranger," said the new-comer, sternly, "I'll show you something."

He led the man to his horse's head.

"Neow, yew see if I go to undo that thar mustang's head, he's as quiet as a lamb."

As he spoke he untied and retied the hide halter, the horse snuffing his hand as he did so.

"Neow, yew try and get him loose, juss as if yew meant stealing of him."

The man raised his hand to the horse's head, but as he did so he recoiled in fright, and took refuge behind the horse's master.

For the mustang's eyes seemed to flame with fury, it laid its ears flat on its head, squealed, shrieked, displayed its teeth, bit at the man, and, raising one hoof, pawed, and struck at him viciously.

It calmed down directly, though, at a word from its master.

"Guess that's how my mustang behaves himself to strangers," said the new-comer, smiling drily. "Yew keep an eye on him, and warn people off, that's all. If they won't be warned off, they must take the consequences in bites and kicks; on'y yew may tell 'em as my mustang kicks sharp as a deer, and when he takes hold with his teeth, he'll hold on and worry a man like a bull-dog."

"Right, stranger," said the man, grinning.

And he hewed himself off a piece of cake tobacco, and began to chew.

The stranger walked then into the store, which was partly a butcher's, and partly devoted to the sale of provisions.

"Ah, Slocum, how air yew?" said the owner. "Glad to see yew, lad. I wanted yew about them thar bullocks."

"Well," said Slocum—for it was Si, regularly at his ease in his wild Western life—"I guess yew can hav 'em same number of dollars as the last, and we'll drive 'em and deliver 'em here."

"Good condition?" said the dealer.

"Condition?" said Si, smiling. "Why, how could cattle be out of condition, running in such grass as they have 'bout my ranch? They're as fat as butter, man."

For answer, the dealer clapped his long, bony hand in that of Si, and gave it a hearty grip.

"Guess," he said, "I always feel a fool when I trade with yew, Si Slocum."

"Why?" said that worthy.

"Because yew kinder get yewre own price outer me in 'bout five minutes to a shot, and the trade's over."

"Wal, and why not?" said Si, smiling.

"Ah, and why not?" said the storekeeper. "Only, with other fellows I always have to fight it out, beat down and haggle, and then when the trade's settled I'm sick an' sorry."

"Why?" said Si.

"Because there's always 'bout half the beasts worth half what I give for 'em after the darned skunk as sold 'em swore as they were like yew said just now, fat as butter."

"Guess," said Si, "yew've had two lots of me. War they all square?"

"Right as right, my lad," said the dealer, pulling out his bag and paying the dollars asked. "There's proof of it—cash down to square the bargain. But yew're tew honest, Si Slocum, tew honest. Yew'll never make a pile."

"Don't want to," said Si, looking at the money, and smiling. "I'm happy enough down at my ranch."

"Ay, I envy yew, my lad. I make my money this way, but I don't kinder like it; one never feels safe for expecting somebody drawing a bead on yew. But take yer dollars."

"Hadn't yew better pay when yew get the cattle?" said Si.

"No," said the dealer, curtly. "It's good as in the bank when yew've got it. The beef will come. And as for me, I've so many hundred dollars less in pocket to take care of in a place that isn't over safe."

"As yew like," said Si, gathering up the money.

And as he did so, a rough, savage-looking fellow slouched into the place, caught sight of Si's money, and, going up to the rough counter—

"Here, give's plug tobacco agen that;" and he dashed down a tiny nugget of gold.

The dealer handed him a packet of cake tobacco, and the ruffian thrust it into his pocket, and strode out.

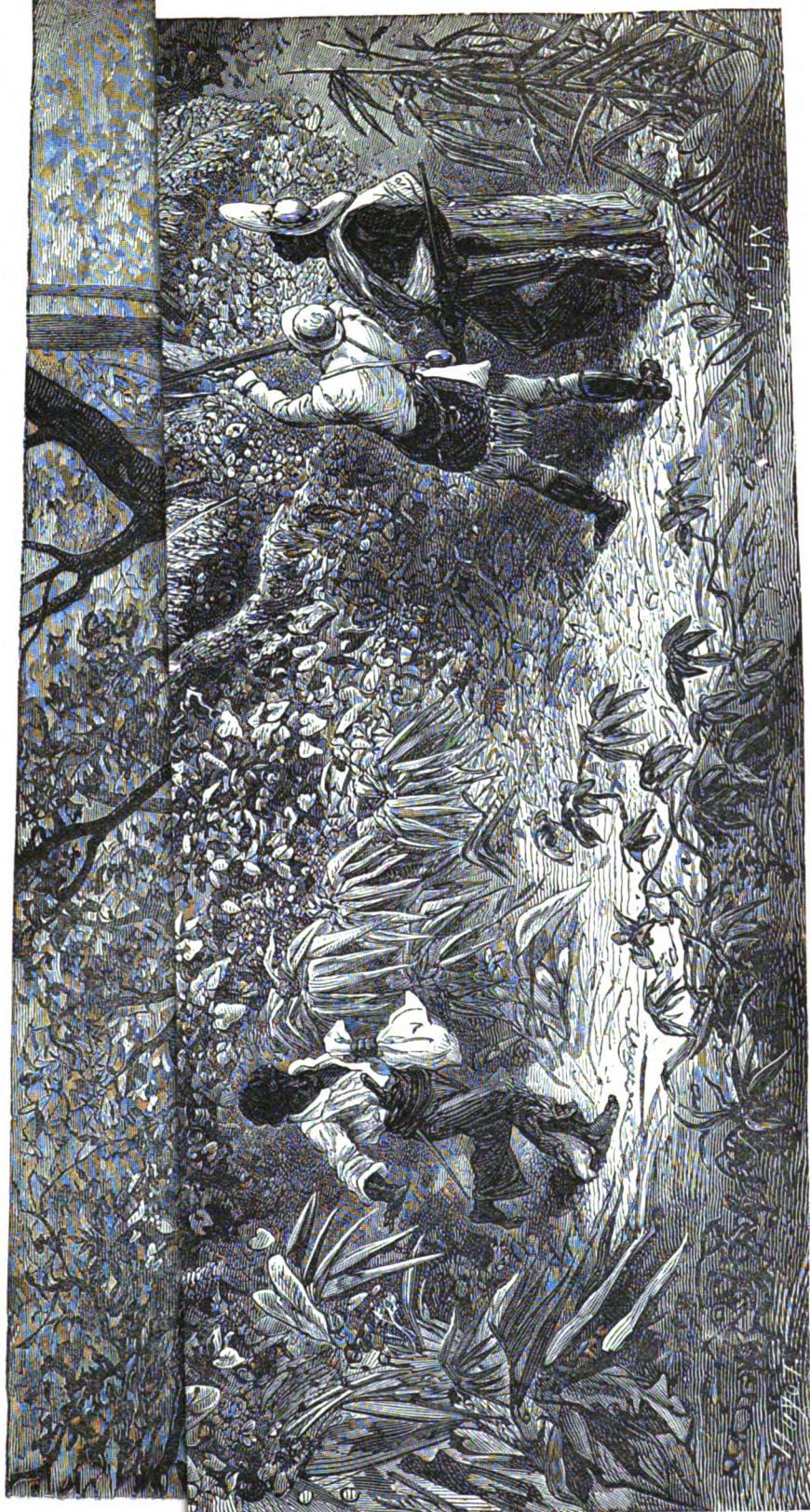
"Guess Jake Bledsoe's in a good humour to-day," said the storekeeper. "I generally feel scared when he comes. He's robbed some one o' that bit o' gold, I know; and, if yew hadn't been here, he'd ha' wrangled over it, and bullied me out of double allowance, if I hadn't brought in plenty of help."

"Ah," said Si, pocketing his money, "it was a bad job for me when they found gold here. It brought a nice lot into the neighbourhood."

"But it brought you a good market for your beef, Master Si, I guess," said the storekeeper, laughing.

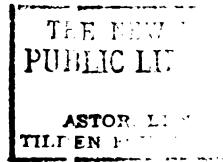
"Well, yes," said Si, "it did; but I'd have done without that. We had Injun and b'ar to fear before. Now there's that lot."

"Yes," said the storekeeper, "and a worse lot than them, for there's a regular band haunts the neighbourhood, and many a poor fellow has disappeared with his pile of gold-dust when he's set off



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for his journey to Frisco by the track. Wal, never mind that. You'll come in and have a smoke?"

"No," said Si, "I must get back."

"Wal," said the storekeeper, "guess you'll take a drink afore you go?"

"No," said Si.

"Bah, man, you must," said the storekeeper.

And, getting his arm, he led him, unwillingly enough, into the drinking saloon. Jake Bledsoe, who had developed into a fierce, bloodshot ruffian since we saw him in New York three years before, slowly lounging in after them, and rousing Si Slocum's ire by blundering against him as he passed.

Si turned sharply on him with an angry frown, when, in an instant, the ruffian had drawn out bowie knife and pistol, roaring out with a torrent of blasphemy—

"Now, then, yew stranger, yew aint a-going to bully me."

CHAPTER XVII.—A SCENE IN A BAR.

SI SLOCUM'S first intention was to strike the fellow down; but reason told him that there was nothing to be gained by a drinking-bar riot, so he said, quietly—

"I guess I don't want to bully yew, stranger." And then, paying no more heed to the ruffian's weapons than if they had not been in existence, Si half turned away to his companion, and said, coolly, "Guess it's me should order drinks. What's it to be?"

"Bourbon," said the storekeeper, uneasily glancing from one to the other.

Meanwhile, Jake Bledsoe looked puzzled. He had never met with a man yet who, if he had not offered resistance, had not shrunk away, alarmed at the sight of his weapons; but here was a skunk, as he mentally called him, who paid no more heed to bowie knife and revolver than if they had been toothpick and quill.

Jake shuffled about, scowled, made as if to fire, half dropped his hand, and ended by looking fiercely round the bar at the half-score of people who were there, ready one and all to shrink away in terror of the terrible ruffian, who was evidently on the lookout for some aggressive person at whom to fire.

There was no one to shoot at, for every man was intent on the instant talking to his neighbour.

The ruffian growled, and scowled about again. His weapons were out, and he felt bound to use them on somebody; but nobody would, either by smile, look, or gesture, offer himself for a target.

Jake Bledsoe, whom two years' imprisonment and a twelvemonth's life in the Far West had turned into as savage a desperado as ever lived, was put out. He regretted now that he had not fired at Si Slocum; and at last he began to thrust his weapons fiercely back into his belt, when one of the frequenters of the bar seized the opportunity to walk quietly towards the door, so as to make his escape from the neighbourhood of such dangerous company.

"Say—you!" roared Bledsoe. "You'll just come back, you bet. Whar in the name of thunder air yew goin'?"

"Oh, I was only off home," said the man, quietly.

"Yew'll come back here," said the bully, speaking

in a slow, savage tone, "and pay for drinks, or yew'll go home after taking pills, and them pills 'll be so strong as yew won't come back no more."

"Oh," said the man, with a forced laugh, which did not conceal the mortal dread he was in, "I'll pay for drinks."

And he walked slowly up to the bar, with as good an imitation of a swagger as he could assume, and ordered two drinks.

The landlord executed the order with alacrity, setting a glass of Bourbon before each; but while the treater was getting out his money, Bledsoe took up the glass before him and drank it, afterwards drinking his own; and then, turning in a jeering way to the assembled company, looked round for the laugh which followed, evidently prepared to fire at the first man who did not appear to endorse his insolent trick.

"Thar, that's the way to sarve such 'coons as you," he said to the man who had paid. "Do you like it?"

"Capital joke," said the miner, white with rage, but forcing a laugh.

"Say," said Si Slocum to the storekeeper, "why do yew folks stand all this?"

"Hush," said his companion; "don't say a word, or the bully will be on to us. He's one of a dangerous gang. They've killed four decent fellows in the last month."

"Wha' you 'coons whispering about?" roared the ruffian, glancing round.

"'Bout the landlord's whiskey," said the storekeeper, hastily. "Will you take a glass?"

"Yes," growled Bledsoe, "I will. Look sharp, landlord, or I'll give you something to make you."

He scowled round again, but not a man stirred—everyone was intent upon his dink or conversation; and with a muttered curse at their pusillanimity, Bledsoe took the glass of whiskey from the landlord's hand, and set it down.

The landlord was shrinking away, but Bledsoe rested his arm on the counter, and, looking over it at the trembling man, he seemed to have found an object for his spleen at last.

"Looky h'ar," he said, with a snarl, "that thar glass pyson aint full. You're paid for it, aint yew? Dew yew think as yew're goin' to pyson us with bad liquor and give us bad measure tew?"

"I—I thought it was full," said the landlord, hastily. "I'll fill it up."

He reached his hand out to take the glass, but Bledsoe made a blow at the counter with his bowie knife, sticking it into the rough boards, and making the landlord shrink back.

"Let that thar 'lone, will yew?" he roared, and then he replaced his bowie knife. "Dew yew think, yew skunk, that I want tew knock tew inches off the top of the glass 'fore I drink?"

"I'm very sorry," said the landlord, humbly.

And he glanced backwards, to see if there was a way of retreat open.

"Wha' yer looking after thar?" roared Bledsoe, who was madly drunk, and bloodthirsty, and the more enraged that he had been unable to pick a quarrel with any one.

"Nothing, sir, nothing," gasped the frightened

man, as he saw Bledsoe's hand seek his revolver, and then that the mouth was directed at him.

"Yew were thinking of sloping, yew cowardly coon," roared Bledsoe. "Now, lookye h'ar, yew just so much as move a step towards that thar door, and I'll drill you with a bullet."

"I don't want to go," said the landlord, resignedly; and he looked piteously about for help, but every one avoided his gaze. "Shall I fill up the glass, sir?"

"No," roared Bledsoe, flourishing his revolver. "What, yew're at me again? Yew won't let me rest—yew will have it. Now, look hyar, I'm a gentleman who won't be insulted by any low barkeeper, and I'm just going to read yew a lesson. Stan' on that thar barrel."

"No—no," gasped the wretched man. "Pray, gentlemen, stop him."

"Get on that barrel, I tell you," roared Bledsoe, pointing the revolver at the shivering man, who slowly climbed on the empty barrel indicated, appealing the while to the assembled company.

"Gentlemen, pray help me," he gasped—"he'll shoot me."

"Guess I will," said Bledsoe, "as a lesson to all such 'coons—there's too many on ye as it is. I sha'n't tell ye to say yer prayers, for ye've forgotten 'em."

Si looked curiously on, not believing that the bully would dare to fire; but, to his astonishment, he took aim and fired, the bullet grazing the man's shoulder, but no one interfered.

"Missed him!" roared Bledsoe. "Stand still," as Si came nearer. "Here, give's that glass of Bourbon," he cried to the storekeeper; and, alarmed by the man's aspect, Si's companion hurriedly handed the drink to the ruffian.

"Guess there's been enough of this," said Si, firmly, in response to the landlord's appealing gaze.

"Ha!" ejaculated Bledsoe, as if he was relieved to find some one ready at last to take up his thrown-down gage.

And as he sighed, he threw the glass of liquor in the trapper's face; while, raising his revolver, he at the same moment almost fired point-blank at the man who had dared to interfere.

Living Rainbows.

THHEY are very scarce, and I don't see a chance of your getting any specimens."

"There's nothing done without trying," I said; "and I certainly shall not give up till I find that I regularly break down. Will you help me?"

"Nothing I should like better. I want one or two for myself, and old Conac would be very glad of a mate."

"Why, you have not got one here," I said.

"Indeed, but I have," he replied; and he took me into a kind of verandah, where, swinging in a ring hung from the roof, was one of the birds that I have ventured to call living rainbows.

It was one of those brilliant creatures, nearly related to the macaw family, known as aras or araras, and should have been a blaze of blue, red, and yellow, with all their medial iridescent blendings.

But the rainbow was very much clouded. The feathers were ragged, stumpy, and dirty; the colours were dull, and blurred, and dim. On the whole, it was a far different bird to the pair I had seen on my way through the tropical forest of Central America by rail—birds that were scared by the bellow of the railroad engine; for they roar here, they don't whistle.

These birds had been skimming along beside the line, even as crows sometimes do in England; but when the engine blared they darted off, with their gorgeous long tails trailing, and passing over the trees of the tropical forest, liana hung, and made beautiful by the feathery palms, they took refuge in a veritable monster, that towered high above his fellows, and were then seen standing out against the sky, upon a dead branch, in all the beauty of their gorgeous plumage.

I told my friend what I had seen, and he immediately exclaimed—

"Oh, they've got a nest and young there, depend upon it."

"I thought the same," I said; "and I mean to explore the forest."

Some readers may be rather startled at the incongruity of the allusions to the railway passing through a dense forest; but in these days of eighteen seventy odd, let me inform them, that if they wish to pass from Colver to Panama, they can take the rail, and travel through tropical forest of the most dense description, with the primeval growths almost brushing the windows of the carriages.

My friend, whom I had journeyed to see, was quite the Spanish don, dark almost as a black, but wonderfully friendly and courteous; and as he stood in the verandah caressing the bird, he unfastened its chain, and, after uttering a few harsh cries, it crawled on to his arm, and then, with beak and claws, proceeded to clamber all over him, up and down, as a parrot at home traverses its cage.

"Where did you see the birds?" he asked.

"In the forest, close to a little diabolical-looking station, which they call Paraiso; though, to my mind, it was not much like Paradise."

"I know the place," he said. "The forest is very dense there, and we should have to take a Zambo with us, to use his hatchet amongst the thorns, and climb the tree."

"Oh, I'll climb the tree," I said.

"Not you," he replied, laughing. "You might climb the tree easily enough; but there are the thorns to encounter, and they are awful in our woods. Have you got a gun?"

"Two," I said; "but they are packed. Can you lend me one?"

"Certainly," he replied. "I'm a regular sporting man in my little way, and shoot everything, from birds to snakes. Which will you have—a breech- or muzzle-loader?"

"Oh, a breech-loader, by all means," I said.

And then, after a little more conversation, it was decided that we should set off by the first train, in the cool of the morning, for Paradise.

I could not help laughing, as I dressed before daybreak, at the idea of plunging into a tropical American forest by rail. But so it was to be; and I

found my friend the Don ready for me, with cigars and chocolate, and one of the blackest Zambos that ever came out of Nature's dye vats.

He was, very wisely, attired in dark cotton trousers, a very white open shirt, and in a sash of brilliant red, which was tied round his waist, was stuck his machete, or long sword knife, for cutting down creepers and thorns.

The Don had the guns and ammunition ready, and handed me a very plain but very good-looking breech-loader, which proved to have upon it the well-known name of Egg; while from his pocket he handed me a sufficiency of Eley's cartridges to last the day.

"I did not expect to find the guns and ammunition of our English makers here," I said.

"Why not?" he replied. "We know what a good thing is, and accept it, no matter who is the maker. You are an Englishman, and you have your Sheffield; but if you wanted a good sword, would you not prefer a blade from Bilbao or Damascus? But let us be off."

My friend was dressed in the true Mexican style, with loose fringed trousers, open jacket, and long flowing scarf over the shoulder, while on his head he wore a sombrero as large almost as an umbrella.

As for me, I had on a strong linen shooting blouse, cord breeches, high boots, and an old straw hat, which was much older before the day was out, in consequence of its being frequently torn from my head by thorns and sturdy creepers.

We were driven to the railway; our Zambo, an Indian black, grinning with delight at the anticipated trip.

And, after starting, it was very delightful—racing through the dewy forest, sparkling in the rising sun. My companion sank back in a corner to enjoy a cigar, but I had my head out of the window the whole time, now wondering at the beauty of the great palm-like leaves, or the grand tree trunks that rose up like mighty columns to a tremendous height.

Now and then, a strange-looking monkey would be peering out from the bosky green; while once, in a dark, damp part, I felt sure that I saw the glittering cream and chocolate coils of a great serpent; but the train rushed on, and I had no opportunity of verifying it.

Birds of brilliant tints were very frequent, but the great butterflies that flitted along by the side of the line took the greater part of my attention.

We reached the little out-of-the-way station, and plunged at once into the forest.

As we started, I placed a couple of cartridges in my breech-loader—a piece I do not often use, for I prefer, from necessity, the old-fashioned muzzle-loader, inasmuch as in any out-of-the-way place I can get powder and shot, and can cut wads, but cartridges are scarce beyond the pale of civilization.

It was a trifling matter, this possession of a breech-loader; but if it had been one loaded by a ramrod in the slow, old-fashioned way, I should probably have never seen the night.

It was a tremendous walk, that, into the forest, for there was neither road nor even track. I had pointed out to the Zambo the great tree, and he had

nodded and grinned; and then we had to trust to his intelligence as he went in zigzags, as the huge trees allowed him, hewing and hacking with his machete at the terribly thorny creepers that laced the undergrowth, and made it almost impenetrable.

I had not the least idea in which direction we were going, for I had enough to do to get along, with the perspiration running into my boots, and the blood dripping from my hands and face.

"Nice work, isn't it?" said the Don.

"Lovely," I said. And really, in spite of the oppressive heat, and the scratches and tumbles, I thoroughly enjoyed the novelty.

"He can't be going to my tree, though?" I said, after going a little farther.

"Oh, you may trust him," said my friend—"he will find it."

And, surely enough, just as I made sure that he must be a mile away, the Zambo stopped short, and pointed with his machete to the trunk of the great tree which ran towering up above our heads.

"Now, then," said the Don, as I stood panting and wiping my face, "the first thing to discover is whether there's a nest. Tsh!"

There was a rustle and beating of wings, and from out of a dense part of the tree, where it was covered with creepers, a brilliantly plumaged arara sprang out and made the forest echo with its discordant shrieks.

"There's the nest," said my friend—"up you go."

The Zambo took a bag and a piece of thin cord, and, with a speed that was almost incredible, began to climb the tree, dragging himself up by the creeper, and reaching the branches where the nest was believed to be, he crept out, and soon announced that there were four young ones. These he transferred to the bag, tied the neck with the string, and lowered them down, descending himself directly afterwards by a rope-like liana, and safely reaching the ground.

On inspecting the contents of the bag, I honestly believe that I never in my life saw four such ugly little monstrosities. They seemed to be all beak and head—for these together certainly exceeded in size their ill-clothed bodies; while the pinky bare skin of their cheeks, and round their great, staring, goggle eyes, made them look atrocious, almost like the little goblins of some distempered imagination.

The old birds—the cock being a perfect blaze of splendour—came shrieking by, but we could not get a shot at them; and it was not until we had chased them for some distance that the Zambo hit upon the plan of giving the bag he carried a shake, when the cries of their young brought the parents up in a tree like the ruins of an oak, half covered with ivy.

Here I got a good shot at the hen, and brought her down, the Don firing at the cock, but missing.

A few minutes after, however, he came sailing back, shrieking hideously, a regular blaze of scarlet, blue, and yellow. This time I got a good shot at him as he skimmed through the trees, and he fell some twenty paces away, in the dense foliage, beneath some feathery palms.

He was badly wounded, but lay on the top of a cluster of creepers and mosses, beating his wings; and cautiously stepping over the dense growth, parting the branches with my discharged gun, I

went to retrieve my beautiful bird; for already, in imagination, I saw the two magnificent skins stripped off, preserved with arsenical paste, and safely stored at the bottom of a chest.

My incautious behaviour nearly gave our expedition a tragic ending, for on reaching forward to seize my specimen I caught sight of a serpent of one of the most deadly species. It was of the kind known by the natives as the jararaca, quite thirteen feet long, and, like most of the poisonous serpents, more than thick in proportion to its size.

The monster was coiled up, with its head over the centre of its folds, and had evidently been sleeping, when, disturbed by the flapping of the wings of the arara, it was about to seize it for a meal.

It was then that I appeared upon the scene, pushing the branches aside with the empty barrels of my gun.

My coming had evidently enraged the beast, for I saw its head quietly playing up and down, and its eyes blazing like jewels as they were fixed on mine.

I knew the jararaca and its deadly powers, and that if I made a step in advance or in retreat, that coiled-up spring of tremendous muscles would dart at me, and I should be struck probably in the face with two tiny punctures, which would contain poison enough to cause my death in less than an hour.

I stood there fixed to the spot, calling myself mentally idiot and fool for not reloading my piece, when I suddenly recollect that it was a breech-loader, and without moving my gaze from the monster's face, and very cautiously, I opened the breech, inserted two cartridges, very cautiously closed the piece, and then, as the serpent drew itself back, I drew the triggers one after the other, without raising the gun to my shoulder.

My two shots succeeded almost beyond my expectations, for the serpent lay writhing amongst the bushes, with its neck divided some six inches below the head, and the head itself lying on the dense leafage a yard or so away.

There was nothing to fear from the writhing body; so, feeling quite tremulous after my narrow escape, and thinking that if I had had a muzzle-loader, with its slow loading—powder, wad, shot, wad, cap—I should never have saved my life, I reloaded, and then taking up my beautiful specimen, now dead, and the head of the serpent, I returned to my companions.

"What was the matter—why did you fire?" said the Don.

"Only that," I said, throwing the head of the serpent at his feet.

He turned quite pale as he saw the nature of my trophy.

"Why, it's one of our most deadly serpents!" he exclaimed. "Let's get away from here."

As for the Zambo, he gazed at the cruel-looking head in a stupefied manner; for his race have a superstitious terror of the deadly reptile.

We gladly got back to the station, wearied out with our exertions in the dank, steaming heat of the tropical forest, and reached Panama, longing for rest and refreshment.

My friend, the Don, was delighted with his part

of the success, and spent no end of time in feeding and caring for the ugly little monsters, the araras. For my part, I was as pleased with my success, for I had added two very rare specimens, in splendid plumage, to the collection of skins I was making for transportation to Europe; and, as a naturalist working in the cause of science, I take refuge under that cloak, so as to screen myself from those who may look upon my acts as cruel.

I spoke of these birds as living rainbows. Seen describing a curve as they fly by, in all the beauty of their iris colours, they really deserve the term.

Three Hundred Virgins.

A TALE OF THE SOUTHERN SEAS.

CHAPTER XXXIX.—THE SEARCH CONTINUED.

IN spite of the desolation of the coast, and the sense of misery entailed by the misfortune that had come upon them, the three little bands found it hard work not to show the influence of the exhilarating morning breeze and the bright sunshine.

There was all the feeling of one of those brightest of spring's bright days. In the air birds were twittering and singing, as they marched inland; and at every step the traces of the eruption grew more rare.

They would not show the joyful feeling that intruded in every breast. The effect of the delicious morning was visible in the elastic step and eager air of every member of the expedition; and on Laurent or Helston saying a few encouraging words, and warning his followers to keep together, so as better to resist attack, they responded cheerfully, and, in a compact body, pressed on.

A rough plan of procedure had been made, by which the three parties were to meet, after taking different routes, at the southern slope of the volcano, from whence, after resting and recruiting themselves, they could take a fresh start, and, dividing, go round the huge eminence, and meet and complete their exploration on the other side.

'Thello was sent along the coast with his party; and, from the black's previous behaviour, Helston had little fear of his conduct if he should encounter the savages.

Laurent took the left; and his instructions were to lean towards the western shore, while Helston took the centre, intending to take a zigzag course, but with the central point of the volcano as his goal.

Everywhere, as they journeyed on, the place seemed to teem with new beauties. The under-growth was of the most brilliant and tender green, while the volcanic ash seemed as if acting as a stimulant, with the accompanying heat and moisture, to the growth, for the leafage seemed more abundant, even as it was of a richer character than of old.

The rapidity with which the great grasses and palms shot up was astonishing; while where, a few weeks ago, all had been sterile and bare was now a brilliant carpet of flowers of every hue, sparkling and blushing in the morning sun.

But it was not only the vegetable world that had been so active, for enough of the animal inhabitants had been left to increase, as only the life of tropic regions can increase.

No less than three times did they start little herds of the small wild pigs of the island, and these were in a great proportion made up of young, some even of the smallest dimensions.

Trifles to record, but facts of great importance to the people on the island, as it meant a supply of food to supplement their fish.

The birds, too, were very abundant; but a kind of wild turkey that they had not seen before was put up several times over.

Unfortunately the reptile element was not extinct, for numberless specimens of lizard and serpent were encountered, and two or three were of great size, though they seemed only bent on escaping from those who had disturbed them in their haunts.

So large a number were of a small size—some four or five feet long—that it seemed as if a new species had been hit upon, one which, from the configuration of the head, was apparently not of a poisonous nature, wanting as did the broad, spade-like development of skull, and thin neck close behind.

These creatures, on the contrary, were long, thin, and tapering to the extremities. It soon became evident, however, that they were the young of the huge serpents of the isle; and as this knowledge gained ground, it was plain that a regular crusade must be attempted against them, or they would soon be masters of the place, and wofully diminish the birds which were looked to for supplies.

Fruit would soon again be plentiful, and a year would so obliterate the traces of the eruption that they would hardly be noticed; and, growing more accustomed day by day to their life, the women had now ceased to dwell much on escaping from the island.

For the prospect had for long enough seemed so hopeless, that, for the most part, they devoted their thoughts to their present necessities, and to their defence from the wild and savage enemies that environed them.

They had been journeying on, keeping a bright look-out on all sides, for about a couple of hours, when one of the women in advance announced traces of the savages.

The whole party was immediately on the alert, looking on all sides for danger, as they joined her who had given the alarm.

Her discovery consisted of marks in the grass, which was beaten down to such an extent that it was evident that the savages had made it their sleeping-place at some late period.

Helston examined it eagerly, and, to be free of doubt, asked himself whether there was any possibility of the marks having been made by animals.

As far as he knew, though, there was nothing but the pigs that could have so beaten down the herbage, and traces of their occupation were decidedly wanting.

It was evidently a lurking-place adopted by the savages; but not during the past night, for the dew still lingered in places amongst the strands, in spite of the increasing strength of the sun.

Onward again, with every one on the alert; for they felt that they were now on the right track, and that, as the savages had approached most probably

by this route, they would retire by the same to some stronghold amongst the rocks.

Every here and there the party encountered some little token of the savages having lingered about there; and it was evident, from the chips of wood and obsidian, that they had been busy manufacturing arms, the obsidian or volcanic glass evidently pointing to the fact that arrow-heads had been made, whether as arms of offence, or for shooting birds or animals for food, it was impossible to say.

Now and then, too, they found themselves in close proximity to one or other of the lava streams, some of which were broad as great rivers.

The heat emitted by these was very sensible still; but they were everywhere so crusted over that the party crossed and re-crossed as the necessities of the journey required.

At last they paused in a sheltered ravine, where huge piled-up blocks of slag sheltered them from the burning rays of the sun. Provisions were brought out, and by the side of the trickling fountain that gushed from a bank of sandstone, covered with rich green ferns, they sat and partook of their meal.

But Helston could not rest; he was incessantly walking about, seeking for traces of the savages and finding none; till, just as, quite disheartened, and telling himself that he must be now travelling in the wrong direction, he kicked against something in the grass, and, stooping down, he uttered a cry of disappointment, for it was only one of the home-made knives that had been forged by 'Thello out of the soft hoop iron, and ground up and bound at the handle by the women themselves.

"Which of you has lost a knife?" said Helston, returning disconsolately to the group, who were watching him as they partook of their meal.

No one answered, but every woman felt at her girdle for the weapon.

"Some one must have lost this," said Helston, impatiently. "Here, take it."

He passed it to Janet, who took it and examined it curiously; and as Helston was turning away, her words arrested him—

"Why, this was Deborah Burrows' knife," she exclaimed.

"Deborah Burrows had no knife," said Helston, sharply. "I gave orders that one was not to be supplied to her."

"Yes, sir, you did," said Janet; "but she went into a furious rage about it, and declared she would have one; and when it was still refused, she took Esther Moss's."

"But how do you know it?" said Helston, growing interested.

"By the handle," said Janet. "I saw Esther make it by binding seaweed round first, and over it a piece of her dress. Look."

She held up the blade, and, sure enough, a handle had been so contrived by the owner, the outside being a piece of old cotton print.

"Do any of you know that as being Esther Moss's?" said Helston.

"Yes, oh, yes," said half-a-dozen girls.

"I'm sure of it," said Janet, firmly. "She took it, and she must have lost it here."

"Are you all sure that you have your knives?"

said Helston, huskily; for he would not deceive himself as to what seemed too good to be true.

"Yes, yes," said his party.

Then he argued to himself that no one could have been here since the knives were made, not even Deborah, who had been too closely watched in camp to get away. So he was compelled at last, however unwilling, to accept the evidence that Deborah had been there, of course with the savages, and therefore they must be, after all, on the right track.

After due rest had been taken, the party set off once more, fresh and well recruited, as evinced by the eagerness with which they continued their search.

At the end of a couple of hours they were well on the slope of the volcano, and here, as the others were to meet them, Helston might have halted his party; but as on every side there were such rifts, gorges, and ravines, every one of which offered the greatest facilities for concealment, he decided to well search each volcanic crevice as far as the daylight would allow.

Before long they were again rewarded by traces of savage work, for the glassy obsidian had been broken up, in one place on a block of stone, quite a pile of chips lying by the side; and as Helston picked up a few fragments of the strong volcanic glass, with their keen points and edges, he could not help thinking how much more able the mind of the savage seemed to be in fitting him with ideas for rendering his state bearable.

Here was a material which, when dexterously broken, split into long, thin fragments of amazing strength, such as made admirable points for weapons and rough knives, which would cut or saw wood.

That their enemies had been here, too, there was no doubt; but the question was, had they been before or after the attack upon Mary Wilmot?

The fragments looked wonderfully fresh, but Helston could not give them the credit of belonging to the present time; so he ignored that amount of the evidence, and they went on with the search till night fell, when Helston divided the company into two parties, which were to keep watch and watch.

The night passed without alarm, each party taking its turn; but, though Helston lay upon the rocks in a state of semi-exhaustion, no sleep visited his eyes, and he waited eagerly for the coming of the day.

The morning broke fair and bright enough, and they once more commenced their search, coming twice over upon traces of the savages, which showed that, as Helston had imagined, they had made the slopes of the volcano their stronghold.

Nothing more rewarded their search; and towards mid-day they were resting, when a distant hail saluted them, and far below them, in the tall, waving grass, they could make out the figures of one of the parties, which, from its direction, seemed and proved to be 'Thello's.

ON A MISER, NAMED MORE.

Iron was his chest,
Iron was his door;
His hand was iron,
And his heart was More.

The Egotist's Note-book.

IT is time for English cricketers to look to their laurels. A strong eleven of bowlers has taken what is sportively called tea with the natives of Australia, and "the coat of arms of the Morleys and Shaws is tore," if we may borrow a figurative expression from Miss Squers, while their sun has set behind the western wave. Nor have our professionals alone suffered defeat; the honour of our British seamen is tarnished by disaster. The scene was the General Parade Ground at Bombay; the date, January, 1877; the time, strange as it may seem, when the wickets were pitched was 8.30 a.m. Before the dew was off the grass—if grass or dew was on the spot which we doubt—the representatives of the Royal Navy won the toss, and very rashly put in the Parsees. This is the first time that the fact of these our Arvan cousins being cricketers has been brought to our knowledge. The Parsees very soon instructed the ignorance of the representatives of the Royal Navy. Mr. Major and Mr. Gheewalla went first to the wickets, and the former, aided by the unvanquished Pastakia, and the judicious Sorabjee Mistry, rivalled the feats of Mr. Jingle in "Pickwick." "They hit almost every ball, and thus entirely exhausted the Navy men." Mr. Morrison was the Quanko Sambo of the day, "he was cover-point, he was long-stop, he was everywhere," says the reporter of the Bombay paper, "because so tired were the other fielders that they could not mind their own posts."

I am almost ashamed to repeat the story, but just after the release of Mr. Tooth from Horsemonger-lane Gaol, a man came into — Club, and looking as innocent as though he had never heard a joke in his life, exclaimed—

"That Tooth's out at last!"

Nobody spoke for an instant, when Major Cuirass savagely remarked—

"I hope it's broken your jaw!"

That was a capital reply of the child to its teacher, when, in a lesson on natural history, he was asked, "Where do we find the elephant?" The young philosopher pondered for a few moments, and then smartly answered—

"Why, he's so big, you couldn't lose him."

THE morality of the business world may be considered at a very low ebb, when almost directly a new article has been introduced, and is by universal consent considered a success, worthless imitations of it appear. These imitators trade upon the reputation gained by the original invention, and if not narrowly watched bring it into bad repute. Imitations are in existence of the "New Patent Stocking Suspender," the only safeguard being the name of Almond stamped on every clasp and on the band. Every lady desiring health and comfort should provide herself with a pair of these useful articles, which may be obtained of Mr. H. J. Almond, 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, E.C. Ladies' size, post free, 3s. 2d. per pair. Size of waist required.

Sketches in a Billiard-room.

"**T**HREE, I'll give you a game—fifty up."

"Thanks, I never play billiards."

The strange, fast-looking being who gave me that challenge stared at me with all his might.

"Why," said he, "I've seen you here scores of times. Are you afraid to play?"

"No," I said, "I'm not afraid to play; but, though you've seen me here scores of times, I never do play."

He went off in a huff, evidently under the impression that I thought him a sharper, which I really did not.

And it is a fact, I never do play; but I like the game, and to see others play it while I quietly smoke my cigar. For it is a good, innocent, skilful game, so long as it is not abused.

The beauty of watching billiard playing, though, is to see the players. I don't mean the loafing gentlemen, who always carry a piece of chalk in their waistcoat pocket, and who, to use the words of a well-known writer upon the subject, have spent enough time in perfecting themselves in the art of knocking about the balls to have enabled them to climb to the head of some great profession; while now, it looks very doubtful whether they contrive to make a pound a week by betting.

All that sort of thing lowers a game, which is really one of skill; and, as I say, I like to watch the tired London men, who, after a busy day's work, enter the billiard-room, and take off their coats, to have a thorough good game to get the work off their minds.

One sees some oddities. One man I am very familiar with by sight, who, endowed by Nature with a rather prominent person, always seems to have his ball left right in the middle of the table; and ignoring the rest, he climbs on with difficulty, places himself in a frog-like attitude, strikes, misses his stroke, and before he can wallow off the green cloth, has a couple of the balls back against his arms or chest, completely disarranging the progress of the game.

Another gentleman of a very short-sighted nature always plays with a glass stuck in his left eye, and a cigar in his mouth, whose ash is liberally sprinkled all over the cloth. He, like another, is apparently fated to get his ball under the cushion, and the number of misses he makes helps his adversary's game to no mean extent.

The other above mentioned, whose ball is generally left under the cushion, is a player at pool, and his attitude in tiptoeing unsteadily, so as to reach the ball, is most humorous.

I suppose Cuthbert Bede is to be thanked for the cognomen given to spectacle wearers of "Gig-lamps." At all events, it has become common amongst friends, and one gentleman who plays regularly is always known by that title.

He plays pool, and if by chance he makes a lucky stroke, which is not often, some one among his friends is sure to shout out, "Whole pool to Gig-lamps?" whereas it is very doubtful whether he ever took a pool in his life.

Another player always attributes his want of luck to the absence of chalk on the top of his cue, and he

is incessantly rubbing it, till some one gives him a hint, such as—

"Come, you'll have the top of your cue off."

One player always goes by the name of "The Chassepot," for he is a Frenchman with a striking likeness to the celebrated *littérateur*, George Augustus Sala. I can give no reason for his being so called, unless it is that he makes a great deal of noise, and almost invariably misses his shot.

There is a very effeminate young gentleman, too, with a terrible lisp, who is also a pool player, and his peculiarity is to make bets on his own prowess. It is his turn to play, for instance, and he poses himself, prepares to strike the ball, and you expect the *coup* to follow, when he pauses, looks round and exclaims—

"Two to one I divide!"

Nobody replies; so he addresses his friends and lookers-on individually, in spite of cries of "Go on! go on!" till at last, in disgust at everybody's want of speculation, he strikes and misses, as much from bad playing as from being baulked by some one throwing a piece of chalk, and hitting him upon the head.

One man, who plays atrociously, always attributes it to the cues, and changes his about every five minutes; for they are all too heavy, too light, or not straight. Sometimes the top is too big, sometimes too little; and he never wins.

Another suffers from a certainty that the table is not even; and if it is carefully demonstrated to him by the marker that the table is perfectly level, he vows that the balls are not perfectly round.

On the other hand, there is a player with a remarkably accurate eye, who goes by the name of "the Slogger." He plays so unpretendingly and with so much modesty that it is impossible not to admire his skill, while, at the same time, it is evident that he is no slave to the game, but merely plays for a change.

Sometimes, but not often, a sharper creeps in, waiting his opportunity of engaging a stranger to play with him, when with remarkable ease he keeps back his own game, making awkward strokes, and always allowing the dupe to be a little ahead till nearly the end, when a few well-played spots, which are made to look like luck, carry him out.

Some people have a knack of attributing good play to luck, not having sufficient perception to see how carefully the good player contrives in making a stroke to leave the balls ready for that which is to follow, and by this means lengthens out his chances of scoring.

But to return to our friend, the sharper. A favourite trick of his was to place the balls one behind the other, at a distance of a yard apart, and then persuade some unwary person to bet with him that he could not hit the red ball without striking the ball that intervened, of course without having recourse to the cushion.

This seeming to be a perfect impossibility, some one accepts the wager, when the sharper lays a penny piece down in front of the middle ball, plays straight at it, and the result is, that as soon as the ball that is struck with the cue touches the coin, it

rises, leaps over the intervening ball, and continues its straight course to the red, and the wager is won—unfairly I used to think.

Moral—Don't play with a clever stranger, and don't make bets.

Three Hundred Virgins.

A TALE OF THE SOUTHERN SEAS.

CHAPTER XL.—HOW GRACE FARED WITH THE SAVAGES.

WELL, 'Thello, what success?' inquired Helston, eagerly, as he ran down to meet the coming party.

"None 'tall, sah; only I worry out ob my life keep togedder such set wild colts as dese here gals."

"No trace whatever?" said Helston, sadly.

"Only, sah, we find one place where sabbage muss hab slep. But look dah—dah Mass' Laurent come."

In fact, there in the distance was the third party, who, on catching sight of those on the slope of the volcano, increased their pace, to stand at last panting by their side.

"No news, Helston," said Laurent, forestalling the question that was upon his friend's lip; "we have searched thoroughly as we came, and have seen no trace. What have you done?"

Helston related the meagre success that had attended their search; but it inspired the other with fresh hope.

"They are here, on the side of the volcano, certainly," Laurent said; "and here we must combine our forces and search."

Laurent was quite right; for, as he spoke, the savages, with their captives, were within a hundred yards of where they stood. In fact, while he was speaking, a dusky face was peering over the rough edge of a piece of rock, which assimilated wonderfully with his skin, while, to render himself less liable to be seen, he had placed a couple of rough blocks, somewhere about the size of his head, by his side.

Fifty feet beneath him, in the black crevice, which was hot with a sulphurous stream, were his companions, keeping watch over the two prisoners, a war-club being held threateningly in the sight of each, lest she should attempt to raise any alarm.

This, at the time, was far from Grace Monroe's desire, for she was too worn-out and prostrate; while Deborah's sole wish seemed to be to keep her back to her fellow-captive, from whom she shrank shuddering away, if at any time the savages seemed disposed to place them together.

Food was placed before them twice—fruit and the flesh of one of the wild pigs, roughly cooked over sticks burned in a lava hole.

But, saving the juice of one or two of the plum-like fruits, and a draught of water, which was bitter and sulphurous to the taste, Grace let nothing pass her lips, being all the time in an agony of suspense and dread as to what was to be her fate at the hands of the savages.

Every motion on their part made her shiver and

shrink away in dread, lest one of the swarthy wretches should seize her.

At that time, however, the savages' sole thought seemed to be their own safety, for they were, from daybreak, constantly on the alert.

Now they were climbing up the sides of the chasm, to peer over the edge and watch the surrounding country; or one would ascend higher up the mountain, and there, perched upon some shelf, watch for hours every ravine that ran between the spurs of the great eminence. In short, they were constantly on the alert, and nothing of any size could have approached their hiding-place without being seen at some distance off.

Grace was sitting crouched against the rock, towards midday, when the sun was shining into the crevice and lighting up its depths, when Deborah suddenly changed her position, and, turning her head cautiously round, she let her eyes fall upon her fellow-prisoner, and sat glaring at her for some minutes without speaking.

Grace began to think on the instant of the horrible fate that had befallen Mary Wilmot; and having no doubt now that it was Deborah's hand that cast the stone, she felt the necessity of keeping the maniac at bay, either by strength of will or some other determined action.

She could not bring herself to own that she hated this woman; but after her advances to Helston, and what she had seen on more than one occasion, it was impossible to think of her without a shudder of dislike, such as ran through her now as Deborah approached.

"Are you always going to stay there and haunt me?" said Deborah, in a strange, hoarse voice, while Grace sat perfectly motionless.

She wished to speak, but her whole being seemed to be intensified in her eyes, which watched her companion incessantly, and with a power that she felt had a certain mastery over the woman; and it was a source of comfort to her to know, in her perilous condition, that Deborah felt the influence of her gaze, even as might some wild beast, and forbore to spring.

"Do you hear me?" whispered Deborah again, shrinking beneath the steady, fixed gaze. "Why do you not speak? Are you going to haunt me always like this?"

Still no words would come, though Grace's lips moved slowly; for her throat was parched and her tongue felt dry with her terrible emotion.

But she never once moved her eyes from those of Deborah, and the woman shrank and shivered beneath the gaze, till she crouched at Grace's feet upon the earth.

"They never speak—they never speak after they are dead," she muttered.

And then, bursting into a piteous wail of misery, she turned her wretched face up to her fellow-prisoner.

Grace thoroughly comprehended the situation, but she felt that she could do nothing, for a word from her might bring the infuriated woman at her throat; and, even in the depths of her misery, she shuddered at the thought of so terrible a death as would then be hers.

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So, as she recovered herself somewhat, she felt that her only chance of safety with the wretched creature was to let her remain in her illusion, and preserve silence throughout.

"Don't haunt me—don't haunt me," groaned Deborah, in a piteous voice. "Oh, if you only knew—only knew how I was tempted to do it! Listen. I must tell you—I can talk to you now. I waited weeks and months to kill you, pretending to be calm and quiet, and all the time I was waiting.

"Don't glare at me like that, your eyes are so cold and stony," continued Deborah, with a shudder, "but listen. I was obliged to do it. Something was always urging me on, and I had ready twelve great stones, lying in different places round the camp, so that when the time came I knew I could always have one to my hand."

At this moment a couple of the savages who had been on the watch came down, looked at the prisoners curiously, and then slowly went away.

"Do you hear me?" continued Deborah, after cautiously waiting till the savages were beyond hearing.

Grace slowly bent her head, as if in acquiescence, her heart beating fast the while, as she shivered at the part she was playing.

"Twelve stones," continued Deborah; "and whenever I could get near them, I used to lie down and kiss and love them, because I used to know that, sooner or later, one of them would rid me of that which stood between me and his love. And then I waited—waited till that other night, disappointed always, never able to rest, for you were always in my way; and I knew that, so long as you lived, he would hate me.

"Poor young thing!" she went on, piteously; "you always stood in my way, and made me hate you, because of your white skin, and soft, gentle eyes. Ah, they used to be gentle then, when you were alive—not terrible and stern, as now. Take them off me—take them off me, please.

"No, you will not; but you cannot always stay and haunt me like this. There, I am not afraid. You need not look at me like that, I tell you. Yes, I did it. I waited, watching till those two women, Janet and Mary Wilmot, were gone; and then I came cautiously behind you—so gently that, as you were dozing off to sleep, you might have thought that it was a dream; and then—then," she cried, exultantly, "I lifted the stone that I had ready, and crushed your head, even as I would that of a serpent in my path.

"What!" cried Deborah, "you do not fly at me for killing you? No, you cannot; so why should I be afraid of you? I am not. And yet I am sorry for you. Poor child! You were very pretty and gentle. But, curse you!" she cried, flaming up, "you loved him, and witched him, and you had to die."

At that moment, Deborah had so raised her voice that one of the savages came and struck at her savagely with his club—missing her, however, for she crouched down to avoid the blow; and after menacing her fiercely the man passed on.

How the next hours glided away Grace Monroe could scarcely tell, for she sat spell-bound, with

Deborah at her feet, watching her constantly, with a strange, intense glare in her bloodshot eyes.

At last Grace started, as out of a mesmeric stupor; for she had heard voices, and the sounds of people calling one to the other.

They were women's voices, and she saw that the savages were on the alert, evidently expecting danger.

Deborah grew uneasy, and, turning her eyes away from the object upon which they had been fixed for hours, she crawled away; while Grace, growing each moment more excited as the voices seemed to come nearer, exclaimed, joyfully—

"Then there is help at hand!"

As the words left her lips, a dark hand was clapped over her mouth, and she was thrown back against the rock, while a club was held threateningly before her eyes.

CHAPTER XLI.—SAVAGE CAPTORS.

FOR a moment Grace Monroe felt disposed to resist—to strike at the hand that stopped her speech, and to cry out for help; but the fierce, menacing countenance before her, and the threatening war-club, kept her silent.

She had no doubt in her own mind that the savage would strike her down on the instant without mercy; so she sat listening, the blood flushing once to her pale face, and her heart giving an exultant throb, as she heard Helston's voice calling to the women to change their direction.

Had she doubted the evidence of her own hearing, there was Deborah Burrows, who had heard it too; and less reticent than herself, uttered a cry of joy.

A heavy blow was the reply, and the poor creature fell back into the crevice of lava where she had been thrust, half-stunned, while the savage who guarded her followed, and hid in the same place.

To her dismay, Grace saw that where she was seemed to be thoroughly hidden from any one who gave a casual glance into the little gorge; and so it was that, a few minutes after, she caught glimpses of half-a-dozen searchers—girls whose faces she recognized, as they came to the edge, glanced down, called to one another, and passed on.

For the savages had been cunning enough to lie close till the imminent danger was past, when from where she lay Grace saw one lithe, dark form go creeping up the side of the gorge, amongst the great masses of black lava and slag—now progressing a little, now stopping and lying behind some huge stone so closely, and so resembling it in colour, that if she took her eyes away for a moment, she had some difficulty in making out the exact spot where the savage lay.

At last, after a long and laborious climb, she saw him peer over the edge, and it was evident that what he saw was unsatisfactory, for, hurrying down the steep side, he uttered a low cry, when his companions joined him, and the next minute retreat was the order; for Deborah was seized by her guard and hurried towards the upper end of the rift, while the savage who had left Grace for a few moments came hastily back, held his club menacingly over her head as he pointed to his mouth, and then, catching her

by the wrist, dragged her off to follow his companions.

The depths of the gorge were a very chaos of rough, sharp masses of lava, and Grace stumbled again and again as she was hastily dragged along, each slip or false step producing a threatening elevation of the club, so terrifying the poor girl that she had hard work to keep from falling prostrate.

As they reached the end, there were crags of five and six feet in height to surmount, the one rising above the other like rough steps of gigantic size. They were jagged and sharp, so that as Grace was dragged up them she suffered terribly.

For there was evidently a panic amongst the savages, and their sole thought seemed to be to escape.

Every now and then, during their hurried flight, Grace could hear cries or voices speaking loudly on the other side of a ridge, which descended sheer from the heights above them; and, as they climbed on, it became evident to the poor girl that the intention of her captors was to keep low down in the gully, which narrowed almost as a ditch, and ran right up the mountain side, evidently to the great conical summit, whose top formed the crater.

Here and there they had to climb over masses of lava, which emitted a sensible heat; and at the end of about a quarter of an hour they had to change their direction, and climb the steep side, so as to avoid a stream of water which crossed the gully at right angles, emitting quite a cloud of steam, which hung over it, showing that it was the overflow of a hot spring higher up the mountain.

The voices still sounded near at hand, and the savages were wonderfully cautious and cunning in choosing their way; for, though Grace glanced back again and again, she never once caught sight of her friends.

Twice the savages paused to confer together, but only to continue their course directly where the mountain rose now so steeply that it seemed to frown above their heads, apparently almost perpendicular, to where the jagged edges of the cone seemed as if they had been broken off by some horrible convulsion of Nature; and again over this hovered a thin white cloud, indicating where the crater of the volcano was at rest.

It now became plain to Grace that they were far above the search party, for the voices seemed to float upwards at times so plainly that they were apparently close at hand; while at another time they sounded distant and faint, as if their owners had given up the quest, and were now descending once more.

The savages kept listening attentively, and though the voices sounded more distant, they were evidently on the alert; for they kept on climbing till it became evident to them that their prisoners could go no farther, and then they sulkily stopped to give them breath, creeping themselves to the very edge of the gully, to peer down on the watch.

At the end of a quarter of an hour Grace was again seized; and, looking hastily up from the state of stupor consequent upon the exhaustion into which she had fallen, she saw that Deborah was being half dragged half led up the gully, whose steepness was now excessive.

The poor girl shuddered as she glanced upwards, for the way they had to go looked like a rugged furrow cut in the apparently perpendicular side of the mountain, whose summit threatened to topple over upon them and crush them.

But little time was given her for thought before they were once more scaling the precipitous way; and this toil once begun, the terrible exertion dulled all thought, save that of the desire for present safety.

Every now and then she was dragged sharply aside in a way that threatened to dislocate her arms, for a mass of lava would be loosened by those climbing above them and descend with increasing impetus, threatening to sweep them away.

Smaller stones, too, were constantly dislodged to loosen others, and come tearing down in quite an avalanche.

Several of these struck the poor girl, so that at last she continued the climb in great pain, bruised, and with her hands bleeding.

Every minute her senses seemed to grow more numbed, and she only climbed or clung to the stones mechanically, so that but for the efforts of the savages she would have been crushed or swept away by the falling fragments.

Panting, breathless, half fainting with the heat, Grace was still toiling on, with her senses fast leaving her, when a terrible cry and the shouting of a name from some twenty yards above, brought back memory with a flash; and she looked up, appalled at what was enacted on a ledge to which Deborah had half climbed, half been dragged.

For it seemed that, from where she stood, Deborah had recovered herself sufficiently to look down; and seeing help far below, she had uttered a wild shriek, followed by the name of Helston.

As Grace looked up, Deborah was struggling fiercely with her captors, and then, throwing her arms up, she shrieked out Helston's name again, when her cry was involuntarily echoed by Grace; for one of the savages, maddened by his ineffectual struggle to stop her, struck at her, and she fell headlong into the gully, rolling twenty or thirty yards amidst a perfect avalanche of loose stones, amidst which she lay motionless.

But her cry for help had been heard; for a faint shout was heard from below, and then a series of shrill cries in response, indicating that the quarry had been seen, and those who sought were in full pursuit.

Even as the cries rose up in the still, solemn air around her, Grace was being dragged on, leaving Deborah bleeding where she had fallen; and in another minute the poor girl and her captors had won their way to the ledge from which Deborah had been hurled.

There was a momentary conference amongst the savages, and then the ascent of the gully was continued; but in that pause Grace had looked down from the great height to which they had climbed, and with her dim, misty sight she made out moving forms at a great distance below.

The next moment, she was seized and again urged onward. The gully was now so steep that it soon became one continuous climb from stone to

stone; but as the prisoner gazed up she saw that the summit was not far above their heads.

As they climbed, there were fresh cries from below, and it was evident that the pursuers were coming on fast, for the savages grew more and more excited.

The leader of the little party suddenly stopped, uttered a few guttural words, and pointed downwards, with the result that Grace was dragged up the side of the gully, over a ridge, and then they descended into a second gully, which ran in a tortuous way down the mountain slope.

It was evident that by taking this route the savages hoped to gain the plain once more, and so elude their pursuers; otherwise they seemed to be threatened with capture by being hemmed in on the summit.

Once, when Grace stumbled and fell, she hoped that they would leave her and escape for their lives. But no, they seemed to place too much value on their captive, and they roughly dragged her up and hurried her along.

They had not descended far before shouts from below told that a party of searchers were ascending this gully also.

To quit it by the sides was impossible, for it would have been one precipitous climb, that the cleverest mountaineer could not have compassed; so the only resource was to return.

How the climb back was accomplished Grace hardly knew, for she became nearly stupefied with exhaustion. She was fully aware, though, that the cries of those in pursuit were ever on the increase, and that, as they came nearer, the savages seemed maddened with rage and fear.

At last they reached the end of the gully, which was a gap in the summit of the mountain, through which Grace was dragged into a rugged depression that seemed impassable. Crystals of sulphur crackled beneath their feet, a steamy heat arose, and the place was scored and cracked in a thousand directions, evidently by the heat, which was insufferable.

Heedless of this, the savages hurried on, apparently, as they descended, rapidly making for a great gloomy depression in the centre of the crater, out of which slowly rose a white, steamy cloud which was broken from time to time, even as it was augmented by sharp puffs of steam, which darted up in rings, as low, muttering explosions seemed to occur in the bowels of the mountain.

Traces of the late eruption were everywhere visible, and it seemed that at one time this vast depression must have been full of liquid lava, till it burst for itself a way out on the opposite side to that where the savages were, breaking down the wall of the crater, and then deluging the island in several fiery streams.

The savages came to a halt after a time, when they were about a quarter of a mile from the edge of the crater, their path having taken them down a steep slope, where they could now see that the apparent depression was an awful gulf, some hundred yards or so across, but of an irregular figure, with the sides piled with loose masses of grey lava.

Here, as she recovered her breath, Grace became more conscious of her position and its terrors, for

should the apparently quiescent volcano now belch forth a shower of fiery stones and ashes, their fate must be sealed.

Such thoughts, however, did not seem to trouble the savages, who, half concealed by the rough masses of lava, crouched there, watching for the coming of their pursuers.

Before many minutes were over, first one and then another head appeared over the edge of the crater far above them, and it seemed as if the searchers were eagerly scanning the misty depths beneath them in search of Grace and her captors.

The savages lay motionless, while a club, held ready and threateningly before the prisoner, told her but too plainly what to expect if she attempted to give warning of their position.

But it was not needed, for a quick movement among those at the edge of the crater told that the hiding-place was seen; and, calling upon his companions to follow him, Helston leaped down the steep slope, followed by Laurent, 'Thello, and a dozen of the more adventurous women, who were ready to brave the passage over what might be merely a crust of lava, separating them from some terrible gulf of molten fire.

As soon as the savages saw that they were discovered they rose hastily, and two of them catching Grace by the wrists, they hurried her along, so as to place the steaming entrance to the subterranean fires between them and their pursuers.

These latter, after the hesitation of the first few minutes, during which they went carefully over the sulphur and jagged lava, became more bold, and ran on, leaping from side to side of the great rifts and cracks, whose depths would have caused a shudder had they paused to consider.

The savages, however, in spite of their burden, were the more active, and they had the advantage of so much distance, that they were able to get to the other side of the depression, where the thin grey steam and smoke that rose partially concealed them from the pursuers.

These latter, too, were hindered by an accident to 'Thello, who, in leaping a crevice, slipped on the smooth crystals of sulphur and fell, half the women uttering a shriek of dismay as they saw him disappear.

"Hi, Mass' Helston, sah, help me," he cried.

And on the two men running to his aid, they found him wedged in the crevice, with his feet against a projection, and his shoulders against the opposing side, while had he moved in the slightest degree he must have fallen into the steamy depths of the awful gulf below.

"Don't move," cried Laurent, going down on one knee.

"No, sah, I no move," cried 'Thello, "or I speck I go down to de bottom, sweep the debble's chimney. Oh, take care, sah, or I go slip, slip down to de bottom."

Helston leaped back over the crevice, which was about four feet wide, and got hold of 'Thello's arm.

"Oh, sah, don't pull!" cried 'Thello.

"Nonsense, man—loose yourself, and we can drag you out."

"Oh, no, sah, I nebbah dare do dat; I no tink

you bofe able hold me up, an' if you can't, down I go to de bottom, and dat's all. If I no loose myself, p'raps I able lib 'bout half-hour longer, which better dan go to de bottom all to once."

"Quick, Laurent—a sudden jerk," cried Helston. "I cannot stay here."

The two men, each holding an arm, planted their feet firmly on the edge, took a long breath, and then, as 'Thello was about to utter a fresh protest, they exerted their strength, and drew the unfortunate black back into safety, when he exclaimed—

"Oh, lor', Mass' Laurent, sah, dat better. I 'gan to tink I going to be cook down below dar, where de fire all hot—same as roace de pig for us all, an' nearly roace us all too."

Helston did not hear this; for, with a hasty cry to them to come on, he had bounded off to the rescue of Grace, while Laurent followed.

"Hyah, you somebody, lend me hand hyah," cried 'Thello.

But he was alone, and the latter part of his remark had been uttered to space.

"What, ebberrybody run away and leab dis chile?" cried 'Thello, after a moment or two.

And then, getting up slowly, he stood staring after the pursuing party; tightened himself up, took a good grip of his weapon, and went after them at a good round pace.

Helston was leading; but he was soon compelled, by the nature of the ground, to check his headlong pace and go carefully, now climbing round blocks of lava, now leaping from side to side of apparently bottomless chasms, where a single false step would have been fatal.

Still he would have pressed on, but for the summons of Laurent, who pointed out to him in a few forcible words that, now they had pretty well come face to face with the enemy, success depended on their co-operation.

"If you dash on like that you will only lose your own life, and weaken our chances of success."

"In Heaven's name, then, come on!" cried Helston, hoarsely.

"You must allow for the women," said Laurent. And, as he spoke, a couple ran up flushed and panting.

Helston unwillingly waited the coming of the rest, who were closely followed by 'Thello, who came up grumbling at having been left behind; and then a forward movement was once more made.

It was a terrible task, though; for, as they neared the vast opening in the centre of the crater, strange mutterings reached their ears; there was the low, rumbling boom of some explosion far down in the centre of the mountain, followed by a great puff of smoke. Then came a few great stones, thrown up some twenty or thirty yards in the air, to fall back with a hollow crash, and, like the whisper of some great noise, heard miles away from its origin.

Then there were flashes of light playing in the midst of the clouds of steam. Some of the crevices they crossed appalled them by the loud, hissing rush of steam, while others emitted the noise of bubbling, rushing water, with strange moaning sounds, that fell upon the ear like the cries of those in misery and torment.

"Dey muss hab all tumble down here, Mass' Helston, sah," whispered 'Thello, stopping short by one of those terrible outlets of the mysteries of the great volcano, and several of the women seemed to believe in the possibility of such being the case.

At that moment, though, there came another explosion, which rent the mist hanging over the great central cavity, and revealed for a moment the savages and their prisoner making for the farther side of the crater.

"Quick, Laurent: go round that way with six of the party," cried Helston. "I will go this way with the others."

"And whar I go?" said 'Thello.

"With Mr. Laurent—quick!" cried Helston. "Don't attack, but keep them in play till I come up, if you are first."

"And will you do the same?" said Laurent, in the act of going.

"I can't say," replied Helston, drily.

And they parted.

The way became more perilous as Helston and his party proceeded, and, in spite of the terror of the women, he persisted in going close to the edge of the awful centre of the crater—the huge chimney running down to the central fires.

It was from no bravado, but from the fact that when there he could command a better view of what took place on the other side, his sight being uninterrupted by the great crystal-covered blocks of lava.

Consequently he was able to see that the savages gave up their attempt to get out by the other side of the crater, in consequence of the existence of a vast crack, which they were unable to cross; and therefore they made for the side where Laurent must soon make his appearance, evidently in ignorance of the ruse Helston had practised.

This was as far as Helston could make out; for sight was interrupted by the clouds of shifting vapour, and the riven, rugged, and split-up masses of volcanic cinder, which lay in a very chaos of confusion as they had fallen after being hurled up from the central funnel, perhaps a mile into the air.

Every moment the path became more impracticable, and the little party grew more familiar with the vastness of the crater and its surroundings; for what had seemed to them but a few hundred yards was more likely a mile; and this, with the dangers to be encountered, made their progress slow.

A dozen times did their adventurous journey nearly have a fatal termination, caused by some woman slipping while crossing some perilous part—a crag that had to be climbed, or a rift that had to be leaped; but at last they were well round on the other side of the central opening, finding that they were shut in from further progress towards the edge of the crater on that side by the rift, a really vast chasm some thirty or forty yards across—in fact, a huge crack in the floor of the crater—which had kept the savages back from escaping.

The enemy were not in sight, and Helston now spread out his little force, so as to be sure they did not escape. He took the edge of the central opening himself, and with his companions about six

yards apart, they kept in line as well as the nature of the ground would permit.

Every now and then Helston had glimpses of the awful road on his right—a vast cavity going straight down into the earth, the sides perfectly perpendicular and worn, and polished by the constant passage of the volcanic stones. It was not without a shiver of dread that he glanced down into the awful blackness; but, turning his face away, he pressed on.

They had been going forward like this for about ten minutes, when a shout and a shrill cry rose ahead, cries which Helston answered, for he knew they were uttered by Laurent and 'Thello; while on passing into a more open space, he found that Laurent and his party were advancing in a similar way to that adopted by himself, and were driving the savages back—these latter retreating towards him.

As soon, though, as they became aware of his proximity they came to a stop, and menacingly prepared to fight.

"Close in at the ends, and cut them off," roared Helston.

And the right of Laurent's line and the left of his own executed the manoeuvre with almost military precision, closing up as they completed the half-circle, which cut off all retreat for the savages, the chord of the half-circle which enclosed them being the edge of the awful gulf.

"Keep closing in, and narrow the circle," cried Helston and Laurent, almost in a breath.

And this was done, the women drawing closer together as the half-circle contracted, with Helston and Laurent at the two ends, and 'Thello at the point farthest from the volcano.

The savages made a rush, first in one direction, then in the other, but they were met by so firm a front that they drew back; while, when they made a third attempt towards the point guarded by the black, he in turn, with the brave women right and left, made so determined an advance that the enemy fell back, and retreated right to the edge of the gulf.

"They must give up now," cried Helston. "Close up quickly. Grace Monroe, throw yourself flat on the ground."

The poor girl tried to execute the order which she had heard; but it was a useless effort, for now, seeing that they were thoroughly outnumbered and trapped by a daring body who had routed them before, the savages in despair felt that the object of the advance was to drive them headlong into the frightful gulf behind them, and as Helston and Laurent moved forward, axe and sword in hand, one of the most powerful of the savages uttered something in a commanding tone, as one would say, "Advance a step farther at your peril!" and catching up Grace Monroe, he twisted his hands in her garments, swung her up, and held her suspended over the abyss.

THE people of Chili are called Chilese. They and the Chinese are generally supposed to be a great distance apart, but there is only an ell between them.

"My dear," said an affectionate wife to her husband, "I am going a-shopping. What shall I bring you?" "I am not particular, so long as you don't bring me into debt."

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER XVIII.—CRUSHING A BULLY.

JAKE BLEDSOE'S shot at Si Slocum stood a fair chance of being fatal, for the ruffian was a deadly shot; but, as he fired, the landlord hurled a glass from the shelf beside him right at his enemy's head, so disarranging his aim that the bullet whizzed by Si Slocum's ear.

The latter replied with a shot from his own weapon directly, with what effect he did not then know; for it was now a case of duel to the death, and the man who fired most rapidly stood the best chance.

Bledsoe, on receiving his adversary's fire, darted behind one of the many barrels in the place, and, sheltering himself behind it, shot at Slocum again and again, without giving the latter a chance; so he withheld his fire till the ruffian rose cautiously, merely showing head, arm, and one eye above the top of the barrel, apparently now taking careful aim.

That was sufficient for Si Slocum.

Before the ruffian could fire, Si raised his own revolver, and, quick as lightning, glancing along the barrel, he fired, his bullet striking Bledsoe's hand, plumping along his arm, and lodging in the side of his head.

With a yell, the ruffian leaped up and darted out, firing as he did so at his adversary, who, without firing again, said that he had done enough; for Jake Bledsoe turned half round, and then fell heavily upon his face.

"Guess, stranger, yew've killed the biggest ruffian and bully in these parts," said the landlord, leaping down from his barrel.

"Hurrah!" cried the others, crowding round.

"Carry the carcase out and bury it," said Si, slowly. "I didn't want to kill him, but he would have it. Put plenty of stones over him," he continued, bitterly, "or he'll poison the coyotes."

There was a hearty laugh at this, and, in the midst of it, the storekeeper drew Si away.

"Get on your horse, and back home out of this," he said. "Some of the bully's gang are sure to be handy, and one such set-out as that's enough for a day."

"Yew're 'bout right," said Si, sternly. "I don't like the feel of having killed a man."

"Killed a man!" said the storekeeper; "why, you don't call that ruffian a man? Why, friend Si Slocum, I do feel a kinder pity for the poor, inoffensive, mild-eyed bullocks that I have knocked down to turn into beef; but, if I could do it safely, I should like to have all the bullies that infest our parts set in a row, and poleaxe them, one after the other. They aint men—they're worse than demons. Guess yew'd better polish one off every time yew come."

As he said this, he hurried Si back to the store, and did not rest till he saw him mounted upon his mustang and galloping away.

"Guess I shall have some of the gang down on me for helping that chap off," he muttered, as he went behind his counter, and looked carefully at three revolvers lying there, loaded and ready to hand. "Never mind, I won't be quite so quiet over it as

Jim Herries at the bar. Some on 'em shall have pills if they don't let me bide."

Meanwhile, a bit of a consultation was held at the drinking-bar as to what was to be done with the body of Jake Bledsoe.

"Tell yew what," said one of those present, "it's time Randan Gulch went in strong for law and order. We've had enough of this sorter thing. A man's life aint safe a minute for such carrion as this. Let's make ourselves into a vigilance committee, and hang him."

"Good," said half a dozen; and the landlord prepared a rope with alacrity.

"What's the use of hanging a dead man?" said one of the party.

"For an example to all of his feather," said another. "And, besides, I don't believe he is dead. He'd come to life again, and be down here to take revenge on the landlord."

"Pray don't lose any time, then, gentlemen," said that worthy, with his teeth chattering. "Here's a rope—be quick! There's an old pine at the corner by the gully ranch, with a branch that will just do."

"Yes," said another, "we'll hang him."

And in another minute the rope would have been round the ruffian's neck; but just then loud voices were heard without, and a swarthy, Spanish-Mexican-looking, showily-dressed man swaggered into the bar, followed by half a dozen ill-looking, well-armed scoundrels.

"Here, landlord," cried the new-comer, "drinks round, and quick. Hallo, pistol practice—man down! Here, old un, sit up; where are you plugged?"

He stooped over the fallen man, and looked in his face; then, turning sharply round, he shouted—

"Who did this?"

But the bar had emptied, save of his own followers, and he had to turn to the trembling landlord, who was busily tucking the rope out of sight beneath his counter.

"Who did this, I say?"

"It was a quarrel rose between this gentleman and one who has gone out," said the trembling landlord. "I hardly know how it happened."

The new-comer grinned at the landlord in a curious way, and his hand stole to the butt of a revolver. He refrained from drawing it from his belt, however, for the case seemed to him urgent.

"Here, Tobe—two or three of you—it's Jake Bledsoe. He's shot dead. Quick," he whispered, "let's get him away, or we shall have a mob round the place, and be riddled. There's a row on."

Four of his followers caught up Bledsoe quickly; and bore him out, taking the track directly for the mountains.

They were none too soon; for they had hardly got beyond the last hut when the late occupants of the drinking-bar returned, well armed and reinforced, to the scene of the revolver duel.

"Quick, gentlemen," cried the landlord, "they've made off for the mountains. That swarthy fellow with them was Vasquez, I guess. It would be the finest day's work yew ever did if you could bring him down, and make the gulch a little nearer safe."

The party hardly heard the landlord's last words, but set off in pursuit of Vasquez and his companions.

The delay had, however, been long enough to enable the fugitives to reach the shelter of the rocky mountain slope, and here they took one ravine, while their pursuers took another; and the consequence was that Vasquez and his band, who had been committing endless depredations during the past six months in the neighbourhood of the gulch, got away in safety, without a shot being fired.

CHAPTER XIX.—THE MOUNTAIN RANCH.

WHEN Si Slocum cantered off upon his mustang, it was with a very unpleasant sensation in his breast, for he felt that he had killed a man; and though he told himself, again and again, that it was in self-defence, and had he not shot the ruffian his wife would have been a widow, he could not help feeling low-spirited and wretched.

"Poor Rewth a widow, though, and little Freddie an orphan! Those two poor things at the mercy of every rowdy who should come gold-hunting out here. Oh, it would be horrible!"

He touched his mustang with his heels, and it seemed to fly; while the brisk mountain air began to invigorate him, and make him feel less disconsolate.

"No, that would never do," he said, sharply. "I'm a man of peace if I'm let alone; but if men make themselves my enemies, I can't help it, they must take the consequences."

"I didn't want to hurt him," he muttered again. "He would have it. There, I wish there warn't a spec of gold under the sun. They've spoiled this place with the lot that's come after it."

Fortunately for Si Slocum's peace of mind, his ranch, or grazing farm, was situated quite twenty miles from the gulch, and across such a stretch of desert as was enough to deter investigators from seeking the mountain land on the other side.

They little knew the nature of the place: one which had been pointed out to Si by an old Mexican friend, Ravola, with whom he had hunted and trapped scores of times before he journeyed, at his wife's desire, to New York.

Si's mustang knew the way so well, that his master let him have his head; and shaking off the gloom that had oppressed him, as he felt how thoroughly he had acted in self-defence, and had probably freed his own home from the assault of a desperado, he rode steadily on, watching the beauty of the heavens as the sun began to decline.

Right in front of him rose, apparently close by, a spur of the range of mountains which ran north past Randan Gulch, and just beyond this spur was his home.

Seen from the desert plain he was cantering across, the mountains looked bare and desolate; but no sooner was this forbidding commencement passed, and the mustang began to climb, than the rugged land seemed to be broken up into ravines and gullies of the most precipitous nature, the rock towering up, so that in many places the bottoms of the gulches were cool, moist, and shady.

In a few minutes, one who knew his way through the maze of twists and turns, with tracks along the edges of precipitous shelves of rock, had passed the desolate region facing the sandy, alkaline plain, which was thoroughly shut out; and still journeying to-

wards the south, he came upon what was a very Eden of delicious verdure.

Glorious plants fringed the rocks, clung in the crevices, and revelled amongst the moisture of the little founts and rills that sprang from the mountain side, and then, dividing, ran along the bottoms of the gulches or ravines.

Flowers and brilliant flowering shrubs clung clustering on all sides, and mingled their flaming blossoms with those of the huge, fleshy-leaved cacti, which grew upon the drier spots; while every now and then green patches of thick, waving grass gave promise, as they showed in little rocky enclosures, of the rich, fertile grazing land, which spread southward in the glorious valley of which this was the northern and enclosed end.

It was here that Si Slocum had come on leaving New York. The journey had been long and painful, but it had been more than repaid by the beauty of the mountain ranch, which, with its thousand acres, Si had marked out and enclosed for himself.

Here, only occasionally visited by one or another of his Mexican acquaintances, Si had lived, so far, in peace. His cattle had prospered, and in addition he had hunted and trapped when he could spare time from the building and improvement of his wild home.

For it had been no trifling task to carve out this home, right away in the wilderness. There had been wood to cut down and transport—pines from the mountain side—the cottage to build, the water to conduct by management to the stone-protected well or tank in front of his house, and the garden to dig and prepare for growing the fruit and vegetables for his little home.

But every one had set to with a will—Ruth had toiled incessantly, and so had little Patsey, while Jerry Blackburn had forgotten to be idle, and for quite two months he had never taken a single nap except at the proper time during the night.

This was now a veritable little Eden, but unfortunately it had its risks. From the south and west there was always the danger of a marauding party of Indians finding their way there; and if they did, fire, death, and desolation would be the result.

Then there was the risk of visitors from the north—adventurous desperadoes such as always hung about the new settlements, ready to rob and murder their more industrious fellows—scum from the peaceable settlements, who were driven forth to become a race of Arabs far more deadly in their dealings than those of the far East.

Again, too, there was a peril—that of visitations from the great bears of the north-west, who might at any time come down from the mountains, tempted by the fat cattle which were the pride of Si Slocum's ranch.

So far he had escaped all such dangers, but this freedom had not put Si off his guard; and, as he let his mustang push its way along the side of the mountain, where it towered up a thousand feet perpendicularly above his head, and plunged down into the moist valley as many feet below the narrow shelf along which his sure-footed beast made its way, he began to think that he had been to blame in opening up trade with Randan Gulch—a venture to which he

had been tempted by the great demand for beef, and the high prices he was thus able to maintain.

"It was a mistake," he said, sadly—"a great mistake. That ruffian is sure to have companions, and I guess they won't rest till they've found me out, and tried to put a bullet or two in my skin. Well, let 'em try. I guess it will be awkward for one or two of them before they've quite finished."

At this stage his reveries were interrupted by the loud barking of a dog, and quite a mile away in distance to be travelled, though not one-eighth of that distance across the valley that intervened, he caught sight of his dog, Jack, while, directly after, there came, faintly heard in that vast solitude, a little piping—

"Hooray—fa-ther!"

And little Freddie, with a tiny rifle in his hand, stood waving his little broad felt hat.

Si forgot his troubles in the sight of his boy, and sent back a cheery halloo, waving his own hat in reply, till the mustang passed round a rugged shoulder of the mountain, and hid the boy and dog from his view.

This was cheering to the trapper, for he knew that all was safe at home by the boy's coming to meet him; for the adventure he had passed through had somewhat upset his nerves, and he would have been quite prepared to find that something had gone wrong.

Now, near as Si Slocum had seemed to his home, so wild was the land, and so intricate the way, that it took the trapper over an hour before he came in sight, from an eminence far above, of the roughly built cot, jammed in a crevice of the rock, and surrounded by its stables and outbuildings, if so places could be called which were, for the most part, rifts and caves, roughly turned to account by the ingenious use of planks and poles to roof them over, or form lean-to sheds.

Ruth was outside, busy at some domestic toil, and Patsey was busy at a rough table, ironing some little article of feminine finery; for the climate was delicious, and they passed the greater part of their time in the open air.

Si gave a loud halloo, which was answered by Ruth waving her straw hat; while Patsey gave a cheery squeal, hoisted the bit of white frilling for a moment on high, and then resumed her work.

Ten minutes later, Si had behaved like a bear to his wife—that is, as far as the hugging was concerned—and was seated at the table.

A whistle had brought forth Jerry Blackburn, with his mouth screwed up as he hummed a song, and walked off with the mustang, a great deal of good fellowship existing between the two, as shown by the horse thoroughly investigating the state of Jerry's pockets.

Patsey swept off her ironing on the instant, and pitched some heavy pieces of metallic-looking stone, which she had used to keep the light articles from blowing away, down into a corner, prior to preparing Si's evening meal.

"Well, Si," said Ruth, after an ineffectual attempt to stop the boy, who scampered off after Jerry, "how have you got on?"

"Sold—sold," he said. "And there's the money," he continued, passing her the dollars.

"Why, I reckon yew look as doleful as if yew'd not sold, or else lost the money," she cried, laughing. Then, more seriously, "Is anything the matter, Si?"

"No," he said, gloomily, "nothing."

"Now, look here, Si," exclaimed Ruth, "yew're not going to put me off like that. There's something wrong."

She said no more then, for Patsey came hurrying out with the meal, which was a sort of mixture of dinner, tea, and dessert, but to which Si did good justice, in spite of his low spirits.

After it was over, he proceeded to tell her of his adventure at the gulch.

"Well," she said, "it would have been very shocking if, in a quarrel, you had shot a man, Si; but when a wild beast attacks yew, and yew shoot it down, I don't think yew've any cause to blame yew-reself."

"But it was a man, Rewth, a man—a strong, sturdy, able-bodied man."

"No," said Ruth, coolly, "guess I don't call things like that men; they're worse, ever so much, than the beasts. Don't think any more about that, Si."

"But I can't help it," he said; "and I'm afraid that, sooner or later, some of his ruffianly companions will hunt us out. Oh, Rewth, it would be very hard if we are driven away from here."

"I should jest like to see any one try to drive us away," said Ruth, hotly. "It would be very hard for them, you bet. Why, I'd take to the rifle again myself, in defence of our home. Why, even little Freddie would try to fire a shot at his father's enemies. But, there, I have my cows to see to, and they can't be kept waiting; only, don't give way to such foolish ideas, Si. There, man, let the evil day alone. When it comes, I dare say it will find us at home."

She kissed him affectionately, and went away, leaving Si, quiet and thoughtful, sitting over the fragments of the meal.

"There's no harm in being prepared," he said.

And then his face lit up, as his boy came running up to him, with his little rifle in his hand.

"Hallo!" said Si—"got your gun!"

"Yes, father," said the boy. "Jerry says he's seen a bear."

"Nonsense," said Si, uneasily though. "Well, if he has—what then?"

"I'm going to shoot it," said the little fellow.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Si, taking the child on his knee. "Why, Freddie, you couldn't hit that tea-pot on the table, a foot away."

"Indeed, but I could, yew bet," cried the child. "Yew stick it up in that tree."

Si set the boy down, smiled, glanced at the tea-pot, then at the boy, and back again.

"Well, I guess he won't hit it," he said, laughing; and taking the earthenware tea-pot, he placed it in a fork of a tree that overshadowed his dwelling, and then returned to where the boy stood, who, holding his little rifle at arm's length, discharged it in the air.

"What's that for?" said Si.

"I always reload for a particular shot," said Freddie.

"Good boy," said his father, approvingly.

And he sat down and watched the effect of his lessons, as the little fellow poured in a measure of pow-

der from his tiny flask, then took out a bullet as big as a pea, wrapped it in a tiny scrap of greasy leather, placed it in the mouth of the tiny rifle, and then, with a good deal of effort, forced it down upon the powder, ramming it hard, and then, throwing away the discharged cap, replacing it with one that was unexploded.

Every movement was made quickly, but well, for the little fellow's steadiness was wonderful.

"Now," said Si, standing on one side, "yew've got to break that tea-pot all into smithereens, and I say yew can't do it."

"And I say I can, father," said the boy, merrily, as, placing his rifle to his shoulder, the barrel trembled in his feeble young grasp.

But at the end of a moment or two he seemed to get his aim correctly, the barrel grew steady, he drew the trigger, and a loud scream came from the back of the tree.

A sharp sound of smashing accompanied the report of little Freddie's rifle, for the tea-pot seemed to make a jump, and then tumbled all to pieces on the earth, while the scream proceeded from Patsey, who had been witness of the catastrophe to the piece of earthenware.

"What will missis say?" she cried.

"Guess there'll be a row," said Si, smiling; "but anyhow, youngster, I didn't think you could shoot like that. What would bring down that pot would bring down a man in time of danger, even if it is a boy who sends the shot. There, clear away those pieces. Freddy, my boy, I've done nothing in skins lately; you shall see if you can't hit something alive."

"So I can, father. I shot bear the other day, when I was along with Jerry."

"And killed?" exclaimed Si, wonderingly.

"No, father, but I made him run."

Si had marked down something on his way home, and the next day, taking his own rifle and pouch from inside the house, he bade the boy reload; and then, taking the nearest cuts, he led, and at times carried, the little fellow, till, getting on to higher ground, he toiled up the mountain slope, and passing through woods where the growth more resembled that of Europe, he climbed higher, till he came to where the growth was principally of the pine family—huge spruces, hemlocks, and other firs towering up from the steep slopes.

"Now, Freddie, you shall have a shot at something worthy of your rifle, boy," he said.

"But I'm so tired, father," said the boy.

"Tired!—a hunter's never tired," said Si, laughing.

"Then I'm not," said the boy—"at least, not very."

Si laughed; and after leading the boy on a little farther, he suddenly paused, pointed to a great blasted tree in front, and motioned to the boy to be silent.

For there, high up in the branches, fighting or playing—it was hard to say which—were two large, black bears, while another was slowly climbing up to join them.

The gambols of the great beasts were almost ludicrous, as one sat astride a fork, and waited for the attack of the topmost animal, which leant over and gave it so savage a pat that it lost its balance and fell headlong, crashing down through the branches, which must, however, have broken its fall, for it got up

growling, and came slowly shambling towards Si and his boy.

"Now fire," whispered the former, "right at his head."

The little fellow took a careful aim, fired, hit the bear heavily, but only irritating it, so that it came on with a fierce growl, when a shot from Si's rifle brought it to its side.

"Quick, load again!" cried Si, setting the example.

But by the time he was ready, the lower bear had reached the foot of the tree, and disappeared. Its fellow, however, was not so fortunate; for Si got a good shot at it, sending a bullet through its skull, and it fell some ten feet, dead.

Si called to Freddie to follow him; and, loading as he went, he started in the direction he fancied the third bear had taken.

But he had hardly gone thirty yards through the thick undergrowth, before he heard a wild shriek from his boy.

"Father, father—the bear, the bear!" followed by the sharp report of the little fellow's rifle.

Washing Day.

"WHICH with a heavy wash, and me nearly through my secondin', tea-time's a blessin'. There's something in a good sacer o' tea as sperrits don't come, anigh; not but what I hold with a little drop jest afore clearin' up, but I always sez tea's the most enlivenin' as a beverage, when not drownded after the pot's done with upstairs; an' drat puttin' soda in to draw it, becos we get plenty of that outside, goodness knows."

So says Mrs. Botchitt.

When a faint, steamy odour pervades the entire house; when the staircase walls are clammy, and the handrail scroops under your grasp; when warm, moist puffs seem to come up through the floor, and the gaunt bedsteads stand bare of furniture to mock the thought of rest; when the dinner, for which you have been kept waiting an hour beyond the usual time, comes up in the shape of a cold joint with a hideous gap in the centre; when the door bell peals violently all day long, and nobody can be found to answer it; when shrill talk and the metallic click of patters resound from the remote basement; when you are regarded as a despicable nuisance for not having gone away to an early breakfast and stayed out to supper—the sentiments of Mrs. Botchitt command themselves to the judgment.

You know Mrs. Botchitt very well, for you have met her in the hall on previous occasions when she has been going, and you have been coming home. At such times she has made a feint of covering with her scanty shawl a parcel folded in a newspaper, consisting, as you have reason to believe, of her supper, which she prefers to carry away with her. Mrs. Botchitt has dropped you a curtsey of mingled respect and defiance, and has turned with a benign and sympathetic manner to the partner of your joys to observe that she will, "please, goodness, mum," be here this day month, even if she has "to disappoint Mrs. Winkfield, which, though a kind lady, is, as the sayin' is, precarious, and the servants not all as

might be wished." With the additional remark, confidentially imparted, that "Poor people 'as their living to get," Mrs. Botchitt has closed the door and the conversation, leaving you somehow at a disadvantage.

I am so conscious of this moral defeat whenever I happen to meet Mrs. Botchitt that I have more than once sent down a supplementary shilling by the servant, to be added to her day's wage; in return for which she has presented her "dooty," and has afterwards relented towards me on the ground that it would "ill become" her "not to be grateful, 'er as is thankful for eighteen-pence a day an' a bit o' vittlea." I regret to say that Mrs. Botchitt and most of her class speak of their day's meals as a "bit o' vittles" in a deprecatory manner, which always seems intended to represent themselves as suffering from a delicate appetite, and as not to be associated with the gap in the joint before mentioned. So effectual is this method of allusion that I have generally found other people adopt the same formula, and it has become an established custom never to speak of a washerwoman taking her meals, but as "eating her bit of victuals."

There is no mistake about tea-time, however. At four o'clock she sits down for a half-hour of pure enjoyment. Tea is her only acknowledged meal. "A mouthful for breakfast, a little bit o' dinner—an' Lor bless yer, mum, anythink'll do, there's no call to make a fuss—but a nice cup o' tea I do enjoy." Surely there must be something in the fragrant infusion which exercises a similar influence upon her parboiled bronchials to that of the oleaginous saloop with which Charles Lamb represented the youthful sweep as ameliorating the fuliginous particles that clung to his throat. Breakfast is a disjointed and anxious repast, interrupted by the exigencies of the copper fire; dinner is disturbed by the "second boiling" and the "blueing down" of the morning's batch of linen; but tea-time brings with it rest and peace, as seeing the end of labour. It is the quiet autumn of the day. The fruit, in the shape of a second drying, has but to be gathered from the clothes lines: something attempted, something done, has earned—eighteenpence, "a bit o' vittles," and a night's repose.

The laundresses who establish a horse and cart, and call their laundries by names which suggest lawn-dried linen smelling of wild thyme, are mostly of a different class to Mrs. Botchitt, though their respective homes may not be so far apart as is generally supposed.

If she (Mrs. B.) should take in washing on her own account, it will be a sad day for me and for other householders in our neighbourhood who don't wear paper collars. Did you never, when your stock of these useful addenda runs low, discover that your own perfectly-fitting "Cambridge three-folds" had been exchanged for the stringed instrument of torture belonging to some stork-necked pretender who had bought a job lot at three-and-sixpence a dozen, or for the highly starched, rasping "all-rounders" of a sporting publican of plethoric habit? What security have you that your dress shirt, with the open-work front, does not at this moment envelop the manly form of the "conductor" who rode behind your

omnibus to town? Did you never hear the story of the gentleman who had concentrated all his ingenuity upon the perfection of a patent shirt—who had superintended the construction of a single sample, that he might appear in it at a public dinner—who came home at the last moment to dress, and found a shirt, not his, laid ready for him—who went out wrathfully to the tavern where the feast was to be held, and was transfixed with horror at seeing his shirt, the garment to every detail of which he had devoted his highest intellect, adorning the breast of a waiter? Unable to restrain his indignation, he demanded of the fellow how he came by that shirt. The reply was more than he could bear. “Dear me, sir; yessir, it is singler, no doubt, sir; gentlemen’s linning will get exchanged sometimes; it strikes me as you’ve got my shirt on, sir!”

He fled, dinnerless.

Since the time when, as a child, I strayed on one occasion into the back kitchen, and saw a woman sitting easily on a rush-bottomless chair, smoking a short pipe, and liberally displaying a pair of Wellington boots, I have been curious as to to washerwomen and their habits. Some of their peculiarities have been already noted; but there are three principal conditions common to them all, in my experience. Did any one ever know one of them in whose name there was not a preponderance of consonants, or of vowels so disposed that they had the appearance of consonants? It may be taken as a general law that the names of washerwomen are angular, or, if I may so speak, three-cornered. I have never met with more than two exceptions, and they sounded slippery. Like wet yellow soap, Mrs. Botchitt and her sisterhood always suffer from some deeply-seated complaint, which, in their case, is always chronic, and is never alleviated save by some remedy which is amongst the deepest mysteries of medicine. As a rule, treacle is a considerable ingredient in the composition of this medicine, although I have known yeast and vinegar, or all three combined, to have worked marvellous results, when the “first physicians of London had give it up.”

Lastly, it will be found that the washerwoman has always to contribute to the support of some relation, mostly an idle and drunken husband, son, or brother, who is constantly making inroads upon her hardly-earned wages, treats her with alternative brutality and affected kindness, and would see her starve with little compunction, but that he is dependent on her labour for comforts that she can never afford for herself. It will happen sometimes, on dark nights, that when Mrs. Botchitt goes out at the door, a man, walking with a crutch, is seen waiting for her in the street. He has even been known to come with a low knock, and ask apologetically whether his “good woman” has gone away, yet hoping you’ll excuse him, but it’s such a night that he thought she mightn’t be able to get home so well alone. This is admirable, you think; and so it would be, but it some day transpires that half her earnings are spent at the public-house in the next street; and when Mrs. Botchitt one day falls ill, being, in fact, half starved, and having received a severe blow from the cripple’s crutch, you find that he has been taken to the police station, speechlessly drunk, and that she has never received

the subscriptions which he collected from “the gentlefolks” who employ her.

Perhaps the evident enjoyment of the four o’clock tea has something to do with this condition of Mrs. Botchitt’s life. She will never turn off her miserable dependant—she will toil, and starve, and do almost anything to keep her children and him. She has denied herself everything that he can grudge, and her tea is an unadulterated enjoyment for which he has little liking. She might drink that and welcome for him, since he has grown accustomed to an entirely different stimulus, and at four p.m. has probably begun to spend the evening with a mixture of gin and warm porter.

The Egotist’s Note-book.

A RURAL proprietor in the south of France was settling accounts with his tenants.

“Let me see,” said he, to one of them, “do you remember exactly the day you paid the miller?”

“Certainly; if it was not the first Sunday in October, it was, beyond doubt, the first Sunday in November.”

“And what makes you sure that it was one of those days?”

“Because we had all clean things on that day, and we always have them on the first Sunday in the month.”

The passers-by were much amused at seeing the following notice posted on the shutters of a large shop on one of the Parisian boulevards:

“Closed, the proprietor having to attend the Divorce Court in reference to the proceedings against his wife.”

This is even better than the Jersey wine merchant, who announced that, having accepted an invitation to visit his friend, Mrs X—, the premises would be closed for two days.

A lady friend of ours was a great stickler for punctuality. When in Paris on one occasion, she sent her maid down to the church of St. Philippe du Roule to inquire precisely at what hour midnight mass took place! She utterly failed to see the point of the joke when her maid came back with the answer that midnight mass would take place at twelve o’clock.

THE morality of the business world may be considered at a very low ebb, when almost directly a new article has been introduced, and is by universal consent considered a success, worthless imitations of it appear. These imitators trade upon the reputation gained by the original invention, and if not narrowly watched bring it into bad repute. Imitations are in existence of the “New Patent Stocking Suspender,” the only safeguard being the name of Almond stamped on every clasp and on the band. Every lady desiring health and comfort should provide herself with a pair of these useful articles, which may be obtained of Mr. H. J. Almond, 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, E.C. Ladies’ size, post free, 3s. 2d. per pair. Size of waist required.

A Night's Imprisonment.



THE wind seemed to be making a protest against some of the unreformed abuses in the City. How it blew! Cowlings, designed to make chimneys smoke, eccentrically moaned and squealed on the housetops; miniature snowstorms whirled about in deserted City churchyards, where funereal trees had been laden with dingy white plumes.

It was in the quiet neighbourhoods and the de-

serted streets, the queer old nooks and byways of the City, that casual wayfarers caught it. There was no telling how to have the wind there; for it got involved somehow in so many cross-currents that, going sharply round a corner backward, in the artful expectation of having the advantage, people found themselves driven unexpectedly into dark doorways, or down cellar-flaps obligingly kept open by accommodating vintners as a cheerful reminder of the obligations of the season. It was a terrible night on the bridges, where a few shivering wretches, huddled together in their rags, cowered in the stone recesses.

Even people well wrapped up in broadcloth and woollen comforters, and with patent double-sewn, fleece-lined gloves on their hands, and lamb's-wool hose, and india-rubber goloshes on their feet, felt that Boreas was coming it a little too strong; and unless they were jovial, kindly, good-tempered sort of people, made uncomfortable noises and disparaging remarks to themselves about the weather. Some of them even went so far as to complain to each other, and bestow epithets on the night, and the wind, and the cold; but these were ill-regulated people, who were not afraid to speak out, and had no sense of the profanity of audible comments on what did not come within their particular sphere of control.

Mr. Marmaduke Moulter was not one of these, but he had a lively sense of its being a disagreeable night notwithstanding; and, though he was not what might be called an ill-tempered man, he could hardly control a feeling of resentment when the wind took unwarrantable liberties with him, and blew him along sideways, or jocularly threatened to have his hat, or nearly carried away the leather bag that he put between his knees while he turned up his coat collar.

The pavements were slippery too, for the City contractors had refused to clear away the snow until the thaw set in, and nobody among the mighty civic magnates had any remedy till due notice had been given, by which time, in all human probability, the

thaw would have done the business. The pavement was slippery, and Mr. Moulter, who was well known in his ward, where good people were scarce, wore goloshes—india-rubber goloshes—that had a tendency to squelch over on one side; and there was something in the bag that required a certain amount of care—to wit, three quarts of real turtle, flesh and fin, calipash and calipee, forcemeat, green fat, and all complete. Now, this is not intended as the old joke, which represents eminent liverymen as great eaters; they don't as a rule, perhaps, consume above twice as much as you and I do, but they go to a good many feasts. Nobody denies that. What is more, they do know the taste of turtle; and there are many purists who profess to be contented with a neck of mutton and turnips, who wouldn't object to change diet with them on such occasions. Turtle is strengthening, it is generally considered nice; at all events, many people like it. Mr. Moulter had no objection to it; and, as he was a man of property, and his cook, though she had forty pounds a year, was not up to Ring, even if she could quite equal Brymer, in the fabrication of the tempting stew, he had determined to take a little home in a jar, and add "real turtle" to the bill of fare at his dinner party.

To go further, in order to avert any civic animosity that might be awakened by a misunderstanding, I will mention that Mr. Moulter was not at all the sort of man who would represent the popular and vulgar idea of an attendant at civic banquets. He was tall and lean—absolutely lean; so lean that he was sometimes remonstrated with on the subject by fellow-citizens, who stood in no particular awe of him; and one of them, who had been his schoolfellow, declared that as a boy he was called "Lanky Moulter." It was this very man who had begun to spoil Moulter's day and his temper by a chance allusion to those old schooldays. To begin with, the school itself wasn't a very aristocratic one, and the fellow-citizen, who was a jocular alderman, was one of those unpleasant people who always take a delight in referring to antecedents—a horrible practice. One might as well exhume one's great-grandfather as talk of the old times when one looked forward to eighty pounds a year as the height of human ambition, especially if one has contrived to make it eight thousand by one's "undeviating integrity, energy, and enterprise." It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that Mr. Moulter was deeply annoyed when Alderman Parboile gave him the compliments of the season, in the council chamber itself, with other members of the Court present, and said—

" You don't look the worse for the dinner yesterday. That was different from our porridge supper at old St. Boniface's, forty—ah! it must be five-and-forty—years ago, wasn't it? I wonder what has become of poor Walter? You never heard anything about him, I suppose? "

Now, there were several elements of deep annoyance in this simple speech. First, the dinner had not agreed with him very well. The hot buttered muffins, which were always brought in as a kind of grace after meat at civic feasts, and eaten as olives are eaten at other banquets, had been leathery, and not sufficiently steeped in their luscious accompaniment; there had been no venison, and its place was

indifferently supplied by Welsh mutton. But there, these things are only mentioned as matters that might reasonably affect even a recluse.

It happened, too, that the allusion to "poor Walter" was remarkably ill-timed.

For it was only that very morning that Mr. Moulter had come across a bundle of old letters, which had tumbled out of a neglected pigeon-hole while he was looking in the bureau of his dressing-room for a piece of court-plaster. He had cut himself in shaving, and, being in imminent need of a styptic, of course found that the little book devoted to black sticking-silk which occupied a corner of his dressing-case was quite empty. With a vague recollection that he had put a piece carefully away somewhere, he had gone, with only half-dried chin, to the bureau in the little ante-room, had begun to rummage its inner drawers and recesses, and beheld a bundle of yellowish letters, tied with string, that kept him there till the blood, oozing from his razor-cut, had all congealed—till his hands were numb, his face as though it had been rasped, his hair like threads of hoar frost. Oh, those letters! Where was his wild, wilful brother now? Why were the first letters neglected, the last altogether unanswered, written as they were from a foreign port, and announcing that there were a wife and child in England? They were unanswered, and the brother who had run away and gone to sea might have perished in the deep, or have risen to fortune, as he himself had done. He had enough to think of at the time when he had placed his foot on the third or fourth rung of fortune's ladder, and feared lest a brother's claims, or the claim of a sister-in-law and two or three nephews or nieces, might pull him down.

Besides, there had been his own marriage to look to. The daughter of Bootle, the great colonial broker, was not to be disgusted with family claims. Some day he had said to himself that he would make inquiries, discreetly relieve any real distress, or, what would be better, if he found that his brother was alive and respectable, or dead, and his widow provided for, he might go so far as to lead the way to inviting them to dinner sometimes on a Sunday.

Meanwhile—well, meanwhile, morning, noon, and night, he had something else to do. Six years passed, and he had three children of his own, before he was startled by a newspaper announcement:—"The ship Jungapore was reported yesterday at Liverpool, with the melancholy intelligence that her commander, Captain Walter Moulter, had died on the homeward passage from Bombay. It is understood that the owners, Messrs. Catchpole and Nibler, have expressed their deep sympathy with the widow and family of the late Captain Moulter, who had, it is believed, effected an insurance on his life in an office whose claims to public recognition we have often advocated." And then followed a puff to an insurance association, which was duly acknowledged by the insertion of the society's advertisements for six months afterwards.

There was an end of his responsibility, of course; and if the family had been in any great distress, they would have applied to him. Perhaps his brother had never even mentioned his name, and he had enough to do in attending to his own business; and yet, after years and years had elapsed, that bundle of letters tumbling suddenly out of the old bureau

seemed to speak to him with the voice of his dead brother lying at the bottom of the sea, and perhaps shrouded in a coral coffin by that time, or eaten by monsters of the deep that had in their turn been eaten at companies' dinners in lobster salad or the flavouring of melted butter. Mr. Moulter didn't think of the latter probability. The voice sounded very distinctly to him—a fresh, bold, frank voice—that of a lad at school; but it was soft and low, as though it came from ocean depths.

But there was another voice sounding from the unknown.

A voice husned long ago. It was the echo of no written language. She wrote seldom, not more than once or twice before that terrible nothing when a body was washed ashore on the muddy bank of the river by Long Reach.

It was no fault of his, he believed, that this was the end. He had not deceived her. She knew that she was never likely to be his wife, and she had begun to drink the bitter dregs of an evil life before she laid her snares for him; but the phantom of that early sin was not fully laid.

There were moments when he pictured her—poor, outcast, despairing, perhaps loving him with what of womanly sentiment there was in her bruised heart, taking that awful leap into the dark from the slimy steps of the bridge, and sinking, sinking in the turbid river—pictured her livid face coming up to the cold clear sky at dawn; and the inquest, and his own agony, and his fear to inquire at the place where she had once lodged, or to give any clue which might connect him with that awful tragedy.

These, then, were the disturbing causes of Mr. Moulter's irritability—the dark shadows that fell on the man of substance now and then, and made him feel uneasy, as for a wrong unatoned and a duty utterly neglected. They had dwelt with him all that day. He had taken them to bed with him at night, and got up with them still in attendance upon him the next morning, when he had to attend at the Mansion House, and waited the Lord Mayor's leisure in the police-court. There was a case before his lordship. The prisoner, "whose head," to use the ordinary phrase, "could scarcely be seen above the top of the dock," was a street Arab—a wretched, little, homeless boy—one of those of whom the State takes no heed until they have matriculated in crime, when it at once provides for them, and puts them to the thieves' school. He had been found "loitering about;" was suspected of being the companion of some of the worst young vagabonds in the metropolis; had obstructed an active and intelligent body of public protectors in the execution of their duty, by not making himself invisible, and by asking one of the particular representatives why he didn't hit one of his own size. He was ragged, muddy, frost-bitten, pale with the dead-white of want. Where did he live? Mostly in Bangs's-alley, Clarkingwell. Where did he sleep last night? Under a cart in Spittlefields Market. What did he work at? Why, not at nothing hardly. Who'd give him a job, when he hadn't got nobody to give him a character? Had he ever been in trouble for stealing? No; nor yet for nothing else—except that the police was always a chivying of him; and if they said as he ever they'

anything, they was a lie. They wouldn't never let him be ; not if even he got a job to 'old a horse or what not, they druv' him away.

The usual story. The police must be protected in the execution of a difficult and arduous duty. Ruffians could not be permitted to molest them. Boys had no business to be homeless and friendless. And yet, with these stock phrases on his lips, the Lord Mayor discharged the prisoner with a caution. Mr. Moulder somehow was affected by this, and furtively sent the poor little wretch half a crown. The shadows moved swiftly to a greater distance, and he felt better—felt so well, in fact, that he called in Cornhill to order the turtle, called for it when he left his office, and dropped in to a comfortable little late dinner—quite a plain affair—with a glass of punch after it to keep the cold out, though he left in good time to catch the late train that would carry him home.

Now, if any one can explain why he took the short cut when he had more than a quarter of an hour to spare, I confess I can't. However that may have been, he turned and twisted about in all sorts of odd nooks and corners, till, on reaching a very lonely place under an archway, and sharp round by a pump, there came such a sudden gust as nearly drove him off his feet, and compelled him to turn aside under a dark porch for momentary shelter.

He knew where he was well enough. He'd never been there on Sundays ; but he knew that the porch was a church porch, and could almost make out the grinning face of a carved gargoyle just above. At all events, he knew it was there, and he had a pretty accurate idea even of the inside of the building. Here it was that he stopped, then, and, looking up for a moment at the dark, sombre pile, leaned against the heavy, iron-studded oaken door to pull up one of his goloshes. He would have leaned against it, that is to say, if it hadn't instantly yielded to his weight, and precipitated him, head foremost, into the entry of the sacred edifice.

He was more frightened than hurt, and scrambled up again in a moment ; but the heavy door rebounded, and, being caught by a cross-current of wind that seemed to come straight down the aisle, clanged to with an awful sound, and seemed to double-lock itself in a moment, so that he could not stir it, though he tugged and tore at the rusty handle of the lock till the perspiration strewed from his face.

It was only after several minutes of his exertion that he began to consider how it was that the door had been left open ; and to come to the conclusion that there was somebody there who had carelessly neglected to shut it after him. He hadn't got over the first nervous sensation, however ; and even if he had, he wouldn't have liked to holla in a church. Nobody would, even if they were the most matter-of-fact in temperament, and had nothing whatever to do with the Corporation of London.

If he had possessed a lucifer match, it would have been better ; but he could only just guess his way, and feel along the tops of the pews, and shuffle with his feet for fear of pitching over a stray hassock—for he had all his senses about him, mind you ; though it was really very awful to fancy he could just make out the monuments and marble tablets on the walls, and to hear the wind moaning in the organ-loft and

rumbling outside, and rustling in ghostly whispers round the tables of the Ten Commandments.

Once or twice, too, he thought he heard other sounds, but it was too dark to see anything ; and only when he reached the vestry door, and contrived to find that it was fast locked, did he venture to give a husky, fearsome kind of challenge, by calling out "Hi ! is there anybody here ?" in a voice that sounded almost as hollow as its own echo, that came back to him about an octave lower, and with an unearthly tone about it that quite scared him.

Not that he was easily scared, mind you. After about a quarter of an hour's reflection, during which he began to feel uncomfortably chilly, he tried to resign himself to his fate, cheered only by the determination to make an example of the miscreant who had been guilty of such gross negligence as to leave open the door of a City church. The next thing was to find a seat—a thing not very difficult to do where there were a dozen tall, high-backed, cushioned pews at his disposal ; and he groped his way, as well as he could judge, to the churchwarden's pew, directly facing the pulpit, where he disposed the hassocks and a big Bible or two as comfortably as possible to form a pillow, and stretched himself at full length. It was no use, of course, for he was up on his elbow every five minutes, listening and watching ; and even when he lay quite still, his eyes were staring wide open, and fixed upon that particular spot of the surrounding gloom in which he supposed the pulpit to be situated.

It was only after he seemed to have been there for hours that he made another desperate sally towards the porch, with the intention of trying once more to force back the lock. He had only gone a dozen steps, however, when he stumbled over something that lay in the aisle—something that he thought at first was his own bag ; but it was another bag, not unlike it in size, but quite empty, and lined with what felt like thick green baize. He had heard something jingle, and stooped to feel on the rush matting if anything had fallen out.

His experiences as a shrewd man of business enabled him to discover, even by touch, what were the cold iron implements that jingled again as he stirred them with his hand. A short steel crowbar, a couple of skeleton keys, and a long, thin, painter's knife, as sure as he was a living liveryman. If these things were indications of the company whose presence he had been inviting, he was in imminent danger indeed. He left them where they lay, and crept back as best he could to the pew.

What a night ! The silence, deep and unbroken as it had seemed, became full of strange sounds. It was only when the clock in the tower overhead struck the hour that he could believe in the reality of the stillness that reigned everywhere ; and sometimes he must have missed the clock itself in the surging noise that roared and rushed through his ears. Quarter by quarter, however, he waited for the chimes, and never had they gone so slowly. He thought he must go mad, for he heard familiar voices—voices of living people, voices of people who were dead, and whom he thought he must have forgotten long ago ; among them all, sometimes living, sometimes dead, those two which had seemed to sound again when he saw

the packet of letters in the old bureau. Only one thing could he fix his mind upon with earnest purpose amidst all this confusion. His eyes, to which no wink of sleep would come, were directed, without a moment's intermission, to the pulpit. There was something in the idea of a pulpit that his mind could grasp; it was a kind of lighthouse to keep him from mental shipwreck.

He had heard real sounds once or twice—sounds that he had scarcely thought about, believing them to be the scuffling of rats; and now he heard a scratching which, as near as he could judge, seemed to be in the pulpit itself. Goodness! what was that? A lighthouse did he see? Was he really going crazy, or was that a red, glowing spark of light, just glimmering and fading—glimmering and fading up there in the dim distance, at about the level of the book cushion?

But for the subtle odour that was perceptible in the air, he might have thought it an illusion; but the unmistakable scent of strong tobacco dispelled it. There was somebody smoking in the pulpit. Was it a burglar? Was it a drunken sexton, or an intoxicated beadle? Human nature could bear such suspense no longer.

"Hi! hallo there! I see you, sir," he cried in an agony of mingled terror and indignation. "Come down immediately, and let me out, and I will make it worth your while. I have no valuables whatever about me," he added, prudently; "but I can reward you. I am a merchant, and—and a liveryman, and I came in here by accident."

"Wot," cried thin, piping voice from the spot to which he had addressed his remarks, "aint you one on 'em? Then how did you come in here, and why don't you let yourself out?"

It was a boy's voice, and Mr. Moulter was reassured.

"The door has locked itself, my—my boy," he said, with an attempt to recover his magisterial manner, "and if you know how to open it I'll give you—let me see—half a crown. I came in here, seeing it open, and it banged after me."

"And aint there nobody with you? I thought you was one of that lot as stayed behind to see what came of it."

"What came of what?"

"Are you sure there aint nobody there beside you?"

"Not a soul."

"Well, then, lookee here, mister. Who did you say you was?"

"A liveryman, and a friend of the Lord Mayor."

"Sen' I may live!—not the one as I was took afore this mornin', and let me go! You don't mean for to say that?"

"Yes I am; and I sent you some money, you know; but come down here, and tell me how you came in this church."

"Well, I'm blowed! But, I say, guv'n'er, you must take your oath that you won't be down upon me for nothink, as I aint done nothink, will you?"

"I'll promise that no harm shall come to you."

"That aint no go. You must swear to it. Say, s'help you goodness as you won't be down upon me nohow."

Mr. Moulter had this strange oath administered to him, and intended to keep it. The boy came down.

"Looke here, mister," he said; "what should I do arter I'd spent tuppence out o' that blessed shilling as you sent arter me"—("Then the messenger kept eighteenpence," thought Moulter)—"but go down in the market till it was her time to come here. Law bless you, sir! I've been often and often jest inside o' the door, outside there, a purpose to hear her play, and more'n once she's seed me, and laughs, and gives me a penny."

There was a sudden lump in Moulter's throat, sudden tears in his eyes. A good impulse was in him, and he followed it.

"Do you mean to say that you have no other place to sleep in than a doorway, my lad?"

"Only when it'll run to threepenn'orth, and that aint often. I've never had no reg'lar sleeping-place since mother died."

"And what was your mother?"

"Oh, she sold 'creases, mother did."

"What was her name, do you remember?"

"Well, I don't, not esactly, cos, lookee here, she wouldn't be called by it, becos father, don't you see—mind, you've swore an oath not to be down upon me—father fell down and percussioned himself with taking of lead off a roof, and mother didn't believe what she'd been told as her real name was Moulter, through her mother a-makin' away with herself."

"Stop, boy, stop; you are—what did you say? Who made away with herself?"

"Why, my mother's mother, when she was only a little kid. Lor' bless you, ole Missis Martin as kep' the cats'-meat shop, she know'd mother's mother, and she said as her name was Moulter, which I aint got no name partic'lar, though father he was called Spoon, and I'd as soon have that as any other. Here's a wooden un, as I picked up where some boys had been a-spinnin' of their tops."

Did I say that the alderman had a sudden good impulse, and followed it? He had two, and followed both.

"And have you only had as much dinner as you have bought for twopence this morning?" he said, looking at the boy by the faint light of the early dawn, just sending a few pale rays through the high windows of the church.

"And a werry good one, too. Two baked taters and a savey-lawyer, as is both warmin' and fillin'. Wot's the odds?"

"What's your Christian name?"

"Dick—leastways Richard."

"Well, then, Richard, would you like a little turtle soup?"

"Stow that, yer know, guv'n'er; don't chaff a poor cove."

"Not a bit of it. Look here, Richard, here's a jar. You see, I take off the brown paper, I take off the bladder, I take your wooden spoon, I dig out a lump of jelly, you open your mouth, I put the lump of jelly into it. Now, how do you like it?"

"Oh, my eye, guv'n'er! Aint that prime, eh? Why, if it was only warmed it 'ud be better than leg o' beef! I don't know as it wouldn't be a'most as nice as alleymode."

Mr. Moulter laughed—he did indeed—laughed as

he dug out another spoonful of turtle ; and yet a tear came into his eye. It was a rather hysterical laugh, after all.

" You shall never want a meal again if I can help it—and if you will be a good lad, Richard," he said presently, putting his hand on the boy's shoulder, and looking up at the pulpit as though there was an invisible witness somewhere in that direction.

Just then there came a burst of music that almost took him off his feet and made him gasp. Was that a mortal organ and a mortal organ player ? Yes, both ; and there she was, her bright face looking over the front of the gallery, for the alderman had given an exclamation of surprise when he heard the organ peal. He gave another when he saw that fresh face, those dark beaming eyes, that freely curling brown hair—

" Walter ! my dear brother Walter !" he faltered.

" What do you want here, sir ? " cried the young lady. " Oh, it's you, is it, Dick ? What is it you're doing here so early, and what's that you have in your hand ? " for Dick had picked up the crowbar and the keys.

" Oh, these," said the alderman, taking them from him. " Might I ask you to come down a moment, my de—I mean, madam. And, first, may I inquire your name ? "

" Certainly—Annie Moulter. I am organist here, and my mother and sister keep a school only two streets off. I do hope that poor boy hasn't been getting into trouble ; if he has, let me plead for him."

" Come down here, my dear, and let me plead for myself. If I can once get out of this church, I'll—"

The door was opened from the outside, amidst a tumult of voices from a knot of people—among them the churchwardens, two members of the Common Council, who had no country houses, but lived over their shops in the City. There were the clergyman, too, and the beadle, and a couple of policemen. On they came, into the church ; and it was evident that they had come to decorate it, for a truck-load of holly stood in the roadway. When they reached the aisle, they stood like men in a dream, and not without reason. To see a liveryman—a civic dignitary—who had been reported missing from home all night, in the midst of a church, with implements of burglary in his hands, and in company with a disreputable lad and a prepossessing young lady !

" I haven't a word to say now," said Mr. Moulter. " Will you gentlemen do me the favour to dine with me this day week ? Annie, my dear, I hope your poor aunt isn't frightened to death. You shall come back in time for morning service, my dear ; and I'll wait and take you, and your mother and sister, home with me. Dick—Richard—you'll find a cab, and then you can ride outside on the box. Look here."

He stopped before a large bill, that had been printed in a hurry by a friendly compositor—

" MISSING, A GENTLEMAN OF PROPERTY."

" Ah, my dear friends ! " said he, sobbing into the leather bag, to which the turtle soup had been restored, and pretending to smell it, " I have been missing for a very long time indeed, and I sincerely hope that I've lost myself at last, and found something better."

*MANUFACTURED
BY THE AMERICAN TRAPPER
AND HIS DOG*

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER XX.—A CLEVER SHOT.

CHOKING almost with dread, Si walked back in the direction of the sound, and as soon as he gained the opening, his blood seemed to chill ; for he saw the little fellow hotly chased by the missing bear, which was evidently wounded ; and but for the child's activity in dodging amongst the trees he must have been stricken down.

As it was, the bear was close upon him, and in another minute would have seized him, but for Si's prowess with the rifle ; for, dropping on one knee, he marked the deadliest spot in the body of the shaggy monster, fired, and, with a growl of rage and pain, the beast changed its direction, rushed into the thick bushes, and there fell, struggled for a few moments, and rolled over dead.

" I did hit him, father—indeed I did," whimpered the boy, as if expecting punishment ; " but my rifle's too small."

" Then yew shall have a bigger one, boy, as soon as yew can carry it," said his father, proudly. " Yew did well, boy. Now we must have those skins off—they're valuable ; and Jerry shall come and get the bears."

It was a long and tedious job ; but Si was a good workman, and before very long he had the skins hanging in a safe place, ready for carrying home on the back of the mustang.

On the way back, Si amused himself by trying the boy's skill with the little rifle, which had been given him more for a plaything than anything else, and he was almost astonished at the boy's ability ; for again and again he hit objects at a great distance, with wonderful accuracy.

Jerry fetched in the pelts, and what was good of the game ; and Ruth Slocum looked pleased to see how Si had forgotten the danger he fancied threatened them.

He seemed, after his return from a visit to Randan Gulch with the cattle he had sold—a visit he achieved without adventure—to take no end of interest in his boy ; and on one occasion, when he had been out with him in the higher woods, in the belt between the home growths and the firs, the little fellow sent a bullet so cleverly into the shoulder of a young buck, that Si was in ecstasies.

With so small a bullet, the little deer was not brought down, and it needed the shot sent after it, as it crashed through the bushes, to lay it dead.

This was so great a prize, venison being not often attainable, that Si twisted a rope round the dead animal's neck, hauled up, and hung it to a branch, so that it might be safe when they returned ; and they were going away, when the little fellow said naively—

" Father, yew couldn't cut that rope with a bullet."

" Wal, no, boy ; that's tew fine a shot. But if it was a friend of mine hanging there, I guess I should try."

" I could, father," said the little fellow—"with your rifle."

" Get along," said Si, laughing. " Yew couldn't lift it."

"If you kneel down, father, and let me rest it on your shoulder, I could," said the boy.

Si stared with astonishment; he cocked his rifle, knelt down, and rested the butt on the ground.

"Go on, boy," he said, quietly.

Freddie seized the heavy piece, rested the barrel on his father's steady shoulder—this being just about the right height for him; and then, taking a long and careful aim, he seemed to hesitate.

"Shall you be very cross, father, if I miss?" said the boy.

"Cross?—no, boy, fire away!" cried Si.

Inspired by the confidence given, the boy took a fresh aim, and from where he stood, about fifty yards from the deer, as it swung by the rope, about the size of an ordinary halter, he fired, struck the rope, and it made the deer sway to and fro for a moment.

"Hit, by jingo!" cried Si; and as he spoke the strands, not quite parted before, gave way, and the deer crashed amongst the bushes.

"You're a nice boy, Freddie," said Si, patting him on the shoulder, and then reloading his gun. "Why, you steady-nerved, sharp-eyed young shaver, you'll beat your old father. There, mind the pieces, while I get up the tree."

He actively mounted the slight tree, unfastened the rope, threw it down to the boy, who, under his directions, tied it where it was divided; and then, as his father came low, Freddie handed him the end, and the deer was once more hauled up, and left swinging in the wood.

"Guess I shall remember that shot, my boy, in case I want it one day."

He little knew how soon he would be called upon to try his skill, as, delighted at his boy's skill and sharpness of eye, he kept him with him while he roamed the upper forest.

Still, at times, a great feeling of uneasiness prevailed, though he was obliged to own that it was imaginary; for no one had been seen across the little desert except a party of surveyors, who, however, seemed to avoid the cottage.

And so a month slipped by, when one morning the hunting had been set aside for the more peaceable occupation of farming.

Si was down with Jerry at the grazing land, where his eye wandered over his sleek herd of beautiful bullocks.

"Guess Mass' Si Slocum, sah," said Jerry, "you no sell them blooks now dey so fat—dey all turn vicious, and make demselbs thin."

"It is time they went to market," said Si, slowly.

And, after a little thought, he determined to go and see his old friend the storekeeper, and do a little business with him.

"How many can we muster?" said Si.

"Bout twenty-four ready to put de mustard on," said Jerry, grinning. "Dey make boofle beef, sah."

"Get them together, and drive them in at the stock fence," said Si, firmly; "and we'll take them over in the morning. We'll start two hours before sunrise, Jerry."

"What we, sah?" said Jerry, staring.

"Yes, we."

"What, me 's well 's you, sah?" said Jerry.

"Yes, of course."

"What, me go up to de town 'long o' you, Mass' Si Slocum, sah?"

"Yes," said Si, amused at the black's eagerness.

"He, yup!" cried Jerry, executing a kind of war-dance, and bringing one foot down flat. "I spect I ready, sah. But who take care ob missis and Mass' Freddie and Patsey?"

"Jack will," said Si, quietly; and he walked off.

"Ready two hours fore de break ob day and de sun get up!" cried Jerry. "Spect I ready now."

He busied himself getting the cattle together—no easy task; but he contrived to drive them all into a fenced enclosure, where, as soon as he had put a couple of fir poles across the entrance, he began to deride the unfortunate beasts, who merely responded by a mournful bellow.

"Now, sah," said Jerry, leaning his arms on the pole fence, and talking to one of the fattest of the beevies. "Now, sah, what you got say for yourself, eh, sah? You run your crookle ole horn into niggah's back again, same as you did 'fore you so fat, eh, sah? 'Spect you won't, sah, cos you go make beef, sah, and gravy, sah; an' you go to be roace 'fore de fire, eh, sah? How you like dat?"

There was another mournful bellow.

"Oh, dat you, ole black-an'-white," said Jerry again, as he looked at another bullock, which turned up its head and shook its horns. "Ah, you wil' sorter blook, you are. You gib me many long run affer you, an' show you little game at kick up de heel and toss you horn. Ah, you go to hab interview wid de butcher, and he tickle you dreffel—tick head wif de poleaxe. Shouldn't wonder if I want some ob you inside for beef by an' by, and some ob you outside for boot an' shoe. You poor sort of trash, you blook, wid all your great horn and four leg, and big gallop roun' de country—tire out niggah get you home. See what you come to now!"

The shut-in cattle gave a few more dismal lows.

"What! you want me feel berry sorry for you, eh?" said Jerry. "Ah! you should hab tink ob dat before. I no time—sorry for you now. Yes'day you set de horn at dis niggah, and kick up your heel, and 'camper round de pasture; and when he run till he tire, and coax you come back, you onkey shake you head, toss you horn, and whisk um tail, and say you no care darned cent for dis niggah, an' serb hun like dat. Now you say you berry sorry, eh? Well, I tell you what—I'll be berry good to de whole lot ob you. Dem as is berry sorry shall make de last beef, and dem as don't care darn'ed cent for all I say are do go to de butcher fust. Now, sar, you hear; I speak to de butcher for you, if you all promise walk berry quiet all de way to Randan Gulch, and no get kick up bobbery, an' play trick wid niggah. You har, you great, red, long-horn, blunt-nose—keep you tail quiet, sah, and listen. You go quiet to market, and I put in good word to de butcher. I not going run after four legs wid only two."

"Jerry!"

"Yes, sah!" roared Jerry, in answer. "Dar, you all safe now till morrow morning; den I come an' fetch you."

Then, hurrying off, he followed his master up to the cottage, where a fit of uneasiness having seized Si, he set industriously to work to strengthen the door

and shutters of his little home, afterwards taking the pains to cut a few loopholes for firing, in case of attack.

"Spect I know what dat for, sah," said Jerry, grinning, after watching the process with a great deal of interest.

"Well, what?" said Si, pausing to wipe the perspiration from his forehead.

"Let de wind come out 'gain, after him blow in froo de crebbice," said Jerry, grinning in a self-complacent manner.

Si smiled, and went on with his work.

"No, Jerry," he said; "those are for our rifles to come out, when we are attacked some day."

"Would de rifles come out if you tell um, sah? No, sah, you make fun ob niggar, sah; he know better than that."

"Why, yew woolly-headed stock!" cried Si. "Of course the rifles won't come out, unless we push them out."

"But you tink, sah, dere row coming, an' fite?"

"Very likely, Jerry," said Si. "If there is, yew will have to fight for your mistress and young master."

"Golly," said Jerry, scratching his head, and going softly away.

He went into the rough, rock-walled stables, to sit on a bucket, turned upside down, and try and solve the tremendous problem suggested by his master's words.

"Fite for de missis and young massa!" said Jerry at last. "Oh golly, I guess I terrible fite; but if any Yankee cuss so much as touch dat dere child, Freddie, I take um by de cruff ob de neck, and I hab off all him wool 'fore he know what am de time for dinner."

CHAPTER XXI.—JERRY IN SUSPENSE.

AS the sun rose, and began to shed its warm beams into the valley, it found Si Slocum on his mustang, leading the way, with twenty fat bullocks following behind in Indian file, Jerry bringing up the rear, to see that none lagged behind.

Jack had been very anxious to go, but he had been told that he must stay behind with his young master, to protect the ranch—an order which the dog took just as if he understood it, for he lowered his tail and trotted quietly back, without so much as a sly bolt at any of the bullocks; while the boy, with Ruth and Patsey, remained waving their hats as long as the party remained in sight.

They then went into the cottage, and busied themselves for a time, coming out, however, again in time to see the bullocks and their leader file once more into sight on the other side of the valley, where a fresh series of farewells were waved.

Si had started so early that he got well over his journey, and saw his friend the storekeeper, who readily took the twenty-bullocks, and paid for them, insisting afterwards on Si dining with him, and making what he called "a reg'lar square meal."

It was one of which Jerry might also have partaken, but he was too much occupied with looking about the desolate place, and seeing what there was to see.

It was not much, but it gratified Jerry, who thought that, though Randan Gulch did not come up to New

York, it was a far finer place than Slocum's Ranch, where he saw all the people over and over again.

He saw a bit of a fight; for as he stood at the door of a drinking saloon a shouting arose and a half-drunk Mexican was thrust out, to turn savagely upon his assailants, and, drawing a revolver, discharge barrel after barrel into the store, with the only effect, apparently, of creating shouts and roars of laughter.

Jerry stood staring, first at the Mexican and then at the interior of the saloon, after which he delivered himself of a loud whistle; while the man who had been ejected slowly reloaded his revolver, and went off, muttering threats.

Then Jerry had a good look at a party of swaggering ruffians who came out of the saloon.

They were, for the most part, dressed much after the fashion of the Mexican, with his gay scarf pendant from the shoulder; one, who seemed to be the leader, having gold earrings, and a scarlet handkerchief bound round his head beneath his sombrero.

Another was merely in shirt and fringed leggings; but he, too, wore the scarlet handkerchief bound round his head, and in his ears were great golden rings.

Every man showed a formidable display of pistols and knives stuck in his belt, and several carried rifles.

Jerry gazed at them with mute admiration; but several rough-looking, bearded miners, who loafed about, seemed to view the party with anything but favour, and scowled at them heavily—scowls which were as freely returned.

Jerry was comfortably seated upon an old barrel, swinging his legs, and watching the dress and accoutrements of the men, wishing all the while that he was a brave, reckless desperado, such as these men seemed to be; when the most gaily-dressed of the party walked up to him, and, deliberately giving him a kick, sent him off the tub.

"Here, nigger, get out," he said, sharply.

Jerry got up in mute wonderment, and began to dust the loose cotton-check trousers he wore, as he exclaimed—

"Here, jess you do dat all again."

A sharp kick was the response, which staggered the black.

"Here, jess once more," said Jerry, "an' you see what I do."

There was another kick, and on recovering himself, Jerry drew his chin up, thrust out his breast, and marched off in a state of the most supreme indignation.

For the first dozen yards his progress was slow and steady; but as one of the party drew his revolver, and sent a shot after him, Jerry took to his heels, and went off in a very undignified way.

"Hadn't we better go off now?" said the man with the earrings to his chief.

"No hurry, Tobe," said the other. "I'm not going yet, let them scowl as they like. I'll let some of them know who I am, if they give me their black looks."

"Perhaps they'll find that out for themselves," said the man addressed as Tobe. "There's a couple of thousand dollars on your head."

"Then I'm up in the market," said the leader of the gang. "It was only a thousand dollars before. Let

them take me, then. If you're all afraid, you can go."

There was a chorus of declarations that they did not know what fear was; in the midst of which, the leader and several of the men strolled away, leaving the opening of the drinking saloon pretty well clear.

No sooner were they gone, than Jerry's black head was seen to be peering round the corner of a building, and then, as all seemed to be clear, he came back with a tremendous shout and retook his seat on the barrel.

"I spect I see dat ugly coon in de 'carf afore somewhere, but I don't know when. 'Spect he run against me somewhere, but I no know him now, and dis chile don't care for asking questions ob people who aint cibil."

At this moment, the man addressed as Tobe came sauntering back, and turning a barrel upside down, he called to those present to come on.

They needed no second invitation, for the man began to shuffle three cards that he had in his hand, and threw them on the top of the barrel for the lookers-on to bet and find out the ace.

"'Spect I neber see such stoopida in all my born days," said Jerry to himself, for he had been attracted to the spot. "Dey got no notion ob guessing which am de card."

For looker-on after looker-on made bets, and won or lost with varying result.

"Yah, yah, golly!" laughed Jerry aloud, as a looker-on made an unlucky pick. "I know'd that wasn't de right card all de time."

"Of course you did, darkey," cried Tobe—or, as he was called by his companions, Coyote Tobe. "You come and have a try."

"I bet half-dollar I find de right card d'rectly," said Jerry, with a self-complacent smile.

"Come and show 'em how to do it, darkey," said Tobe. "Here, you, make way for the coloured gentleman."

Jerry fetched a crumpled-up half-dollar bill out of his breeches pocket, smoothed it on his leg, and then laid it down on the barrel-head; while Tobe shuffled the cards again and again, threw them, and waited for the gambler to declare which was the ace.

"Dat's him," said Jerry, eagerly; but on picking it up, it was a king, and the ace was the next card.

There was a roar of laughter, and Jerry scratched his wool.

"I know'd dat was de card," he said, with a puzzled look. "Nebbah mind, I try again."

He pulled out another crumpled note, smoothed it, and laid his stake on the extempore table, chose his card, and was again wrong, amidst the shouts of derision of the surrounding gang, who were now mixed with the bystanders.

"Guess I got a two-dollar bill yet," said Jerry to himself. "Now, I jess bet him, and win de oder back and dollar beside; for I know I can do it dis time."

He smoothed out his note, staked it, and saw the cards shuffled and thrown, as they are thrown by deaf, ingenious hands.

"Dat's de ace," cried Jerry, dabbing his black hand upon a card, "I know I got him dis time."

And he chuckled with delight as he lifted it up, to find he was wrong once more.

And now, in his disappointment, the black flew in a rage—

"You set ob Noo York rowdy loafers! You all cemetery Dicks—yah!—who come out ob de Tombs for cheating!"

"Here, hi! we can't stand this," cried half a dozen more of the ruffians. "Rot the nigger! Here, stand aside!"

"I gib you all something shout 'bout," cried Jerry, struggling with his captors. "You let go, and you see."

"Cuss the darned nigger—hang him!" cried the leader of the party, who had sauntered back. "Don't let him speak to gentlemen like that."

"Yes, hang him," chorused half a dozen more.

And though there were at least a dozen well-armed miners present, not a man moved a finger on behalf of the "nigger;" but looked coolly on, with lowering faces, while, in spite of poor Jerry's shouts and struggles, he was dragged beneath a tree, a rope adjusted by one of the most active of the party—Coyote Tobe to wit;—and in a very few minutes the struggling and appealing wretch was tied with his hands behind, and three men stood with the rope thrown over a horizontal branch.

"You set ob coward tiefs," roared Jerry at last, in his rage and despair. "Nebber mind—I no care. I seen you 'fore somewhere, you ugly, long hook nose tief; and my master, Si Slocum, gib you one for dis."

As he spoke, he was snatched from the ground and dragged up, to hang, struggling feebly; while Coyote Tobe took the rope from those who had dragged, bound it round and round the branch upon which he sat, and then leaped nimbly to the ground, as there was a shout and a stampede among those who had engaged in the dastardly act, and Si Slocum, rifle in hand, galloped into their midst.

Three Hundred Virgins.

A TALE OF THE SOUTHERN SEAS.

CHAPTER XLII.—THELLO'S DARING FEAT.

IT was a terrible moment. Helston stopped short, as did also Laurent, helpless in such a terrible emergency. The women shrieked, and many of them, in spite of the bravery they had previously displayed, covered their faces with their hands, and turned away.

As for 'Thello, the sight was too much for him, and he threw himself flat upon the lava.

To have made the slightest advance now would have been to ensure an awful death for poor Grace Monroe; while to draw back seemed to be to open up a way of escape to life, but, to a young, sensitive girl, a life more terrible than any death.

"Oh, Mr. Helston," shrieked one of the girls, "save her!—save her!"

Helston would have given his life to save her, but he was helpless; and, what was more, he had no means of communicating with the savages except by signs.

He tried, then, as soon as the first shock was past, to intimate to them that if they would give up Grace they could go free.

At this, one who seemed to be the leader uttered

a mocking laugh, shook his head, and seemed to point out by signs that as soon as the prisoner was given up they would be massacred.

He then signed to Helston to draw off his party, and let them go free, and he would not throw the prisoner down; but if any attempt were made to follow, he signified that Grace would be killed with one of their war-clubs.

"We must not give her up to them, Laurent," groaned Helston. "Can we not cut them off?"

The savage seemed to interpret these words, for, making a backward movement, he stood on the extreme edge, with Grace so balanced now on his shoulder that a touch would have sent her to certain death.

"I can say nothing," exclaimed Laurent, in a despairing tone, "only let them go. It is too horrible for the poor girl to die."

"Better die," exclaimed Helston, "than leave her with these wretches. But they shall die with her," he cried, grinding his teeth, so that the savages seemed to see their fate written in their pursuer's eyes, and clubs were held ready as their lithe, active bodies seemed posed for the attack.

At that moment, Grace stretched out her hands to Helston—hands that dumbly seemed to say, "Save me! save me!" And, unable to restrain himself, Helston made a dash forward.

"Come on! come on!" he shouted.

But Laurent and the women were paralyzed, and hung back, watching the terrible scene before them.

For there, not a foot behind the savage who held Grace, was the awful void, apparently a perpendicular descent into the centre of the volcano, where Nature's grand furnace was fusing rock into a molten fluid state, and where death would, of all deaths, be most awful.

The savage's eyes glared with a horrible malignity as he saw Helston's intent, and, void of all feeling of compassion for the poor girl he held, and only thinking of his own defence, he gave his body a swing, and in another moment Grace would have been hurled into the gulf, when a dark figure seemed to leap out of its depths, right upon the savage's back, driving him helplessly forward towards Helston, while Grace Monroe fell upon the lava and sulphur crystals, a foot or two from the edge.

"Take dat, you black ruffiyum!" cried 'Thello.

For he it was who had crept behind the women to the edge of the gulf; found that, instead of the side being perpendicular and smooth where they were, it was broken up with sulphur-covered ledges, along one of which he had boldly crept, in spite of the awful depth beneath, and sprung up in time to save the life of Grace.

This change in the position galvanized Laurent and the women into new life, and a terrible struggle commenced. It was brief, though, as it was bloody and terrible; for, driven forward as he was by 'Thello, the savage who had held Grace met Helston's blow, delivered with his axe, full upon the temple, just as, avoiding the war-club of his adversary, Laurent struck him down, so that he rolled over and fell into the depths beneath.

This so horrified the others, that, with the women advancing upon them, and Laurent and Helston

each seeking a fresh enemy, they threw down their clubs, just as they were driven to the very edge of the gulf, and, going down upon their knees, laid their heads upon the lava in token of submission.

Their lives were spared; and it having been ascertained that the leading savage was quite dead, they were set to bury him, which they did after searching for a hole in the sulphur.

Meanwhile Helston had been busy trying to revive Grace, who lay there half dead from fear and exhaustion.

There were plenty of gourds ready with water, offered by the sympathizing women grouped around; and by degrees she recovered sufficiently to rise and lean on the arms of two of the women, who helped her over the rugged ground, while Helston, Laurent, and the rest of the party followed with the prisoners, who, on finding that their lives would be spared, became profuse in their display of gratitude, and going down once more upon their hands and knees, laid their foreheads to the earth in token of submission.

"Yes, they seem abject enough," said Helston, in reply to a remark from Laurent; "but we must not trust them, for fear of treachery."

Helston turned to 'Thello, who was refreshing himself from the mallet-cut gourd that he carried.

"Dis choky place make dis pusson berry fursty an' hungry, sah," he said, showing his white teeth.

"Thello," said Helston, holding out his hand, and taking that of the black, "thank you. We whites are too often in the habit of despising men of your colour; but you showed a courage and thoughtfulness in that terrible emergency that will always make me think of you with respect, and look upon you as my friend."

'Thello began to grin as he heard these words; but as he fully felt their import, and the warm pressure of the hand that accompanied them, the tears rose to his eyes and trickled down his black cheeks.

"Sah, I tank you," he exclaimed, pressing Helston's hand, in return. "I neber hear so pretty a 'peech address by white genlum to coloured genlum afore. Sah, I tank you. Dis touch me to de heart; for sometimes, after all, I feel I only nigger, and sort ob trash beside white genlum."

"Never mind that, 'Thello," said Helston—"a man is a man."

"Yes, sah, so him am; but de colour make great deal of difference. Plenty of de lilly women take fancy to 'Thello, sah; but he say to himself sometime, no Miss Grace Monroe or Miss Mary Dance take fancy to him, and if dere been plenty white sailor here, dey no take bit ob notice ob poor 'Thello."

"Never mind that," began Helston.

"No, sah, I no mind bit, and I no say word; only you touch me to de heart wid what you say. Massa Helston, sah, dis niggah—not dis colour genlum, sah, dat dam humbug, sah—all 'tuff, sah—all pride and nonsense, sah—dis niggah, sah, always tink you brave man, sah, and respeck you, sah; now he downright love you, sah, 'cause you got good heart in de right place, sah; and more, I tank you, and I show you how faithful a niggah can be. Sah, you want me die for you some day—I go die

right off, and nebber say word. Tank—tank you, tank you."

'Thello wrung the hand that had been extended to him, and then turned away to rub his eyes; while Helston, surprised at this honest outburst, remained by his side, and walked after the retiring party, slowly progressing over the rough lava and sulphur crystals.

Helston kept back from Grace Monroe's side, feeling satisfied that she was safe, and leaving it to time to heal the breach between them. He knew that, sooner or later, she would give him credit for his honesty and truth, and he was content to wait.

"Well, 'Thello," said Helston, as they climbed on, now slowly making their way up the slope of the crater, with Laurent leading, and half a dozen women acting as guards to their prisoners—"well, 'Thello, what are we to do with these savages?"

"Well, sah," said 'Thello, "dat's de question dat trubbel me good deal. I no tink we able to trust um."

"That's what I'm afraid of," said Helston.

"You no like to try um, sah?"

"How try them?"

"Try um by court-martial for mutiny, sah—find um guilty, and den kill um all."

"No, no," exclaimed Helston. "It would be like murdering them in cold blood."

"Yes, sah, only quite lawful like den. I don't want to kill de ugly ruffymus, but den s'pose dey get kill us in cold blood? Dey do it p'raps 'roun any trial, and dat berry much like murder us all in cold blood, eh, sah?"

"Yes, you are right, 'Thello," said Helston; "but we must not kill them."

"Den, sah, I gib um nuff to eat for week, plenty water, and de paddle, and den stuff dem in one ob de canoe, and say, 'Dah, now you make your hook, and nebbah show you ugly face here 'gain,'"

"I think that will be the better plan, 'Thello," said Helston, thoughtfully; "but we shall see."

They climbed out of the crater with some difficulty, and before beginning to descend the narrow gully which would take them nearest to their camp, Helston stopped on the edge to look down at the horrible gulf from which Grace had been rescued; and as he saw a puff of grey vapour arise from its black depths, he gave a shudder, and turned away from the grey and yellow desolation to look around him.

From where he stood he had a fine view of the island, and could trace the ruin caused by the eruption with the greatest ease. As far as he could make out, they were evidently located in the most desolate part; for far to the northward he could see waving groves of trees and woodland, that had evidently been untouched, and these promised fruit for their sustenance, and plants for cultivation.

He then, having in mind the visit of the savages, and the consequences that had followed, spent some time in gazing over the bright blue sea, to try and discover the island or continent from whence they had come. Once he fancied he could make out a faint haze low down on the horizon, but he could not be sure; while on every other side, far as his

eye could reach, there was the glistening blue ocean which girt them in.

Completing his observations, he at last turned, and began to descend from the giddy pinnacle where he stood; for though the opening in the edge of the crater was jagged, and masses of lava rose on either side, the edge beneath his feet was quite sharp, and the gully beneath went down at a very steep angle.

He followed his party rapidly, and overtook them, where two of the women had been left in charge of Deborah, who, though terribly injured about the head, seemed to be breathing easily.

Here Grace Monroe expressed her ability to walk alone; and a rough kind of hammock being contrived, Deborah, whose appearance made Grace shudder and turn away, was placed upon it, and the three savages and 'Thello took their places as bearers, carrying their burden by a knotted cord at each corner, and changing places and hands as they grew fatigued.

The gully just allowed of this means of progression; but it was a long and toilsome descent before they came to the lower slope of the mountain, where they camped for the night—the savages calmly submitting to be bound, and apparently perfectly satisfied that their lives were spared.

At daybreak, Helston, who had shared the watch with Laurent, gave the signal to rise, and, after an exceedingly light meal, the party set off, and at length reached the camp without further adventure.

CHAPTER XLIII.—A FRESH ALARM.

THERE were great rejoicings in the little camp at the success of the expedition, for very little sympathy was felt for Deborah, who lay once more in danger, and attended by Helston.

The difficulties of the situation were greatly increased by the presence of the three savages, who, though eager to become the slaves of their captors, necessarily had to be watched; consequent upon this, and the state of Deborah, Helston felt that the watching it involved was too arduous, and, after consulting with Laurent, he determined to put 'Thello's idea into practice, and give the savages so much provision, one of the canoes, and send them adrift to seek their own land.

This was not decided upon till about a week after the return from the expedition, during which time both Grace and Deborah had been lying in a dangerous state—the one from her injuries, the other from fever brought on by exertion and the mental anxiety through which she had passed.

On the morning when the savages were to be sent off, they expressed unbounded delight on being shown their canoe; and when the paddles were handed to them, and a fair amount of provisions to load her, they were in ecstasies.

Since they had been prisoners, they had been personifications of docility, and had evidently quite taken to their new life, fetching water, wood, or fruit for their new masters, and once bringing in a wild pig, which they captured by sheer fleetness of foot.

Several times over they had made signs to be furnished with bows and arrows, to bring down the birds which were beginning to abound in the place once more; but it was not considered advisable to

THREE HUNDRED VIRGINS.

furnish these, and they took the refusal very patiently.

When at last it was signified to them that they could take the canoe and paddle off, they capered about, and kissed the feet of Helston and Laurent, ending by giving a shrill cry, and rushing into the canoe, which they ran out through the surf, and paddled in a masterly manner; but only to return at the end of a few minutes, running in on the summit of a wave, beaching their canoe with ease, and then, running up to Helston, they began to make signs.

"I can't understand what they want, Laurent; can you?" said the doctor.

"No, without it is a piece of rope."

"Dey want um fishin' line, sah," said 'Thello. "Dat's it."

"Give them one," said Helston. "I believe you are right, 'Thello."

And so it proved; for upon a line and a couple of hooks being shown them, they snatched them greedily, ran down to their canoe, launched her, and paddled off on the crest of the next returning wave.

The party on the island stood upon the sands, watching them; till the little canoe became a mere speck upon the water—'Thello moralizing as they disappeared.

"Dey not such berry bad sorter men, affer all; and I no see why dey not stay and make demselves useful—cut de wood, fesh de water, and make de fire for me when I go to cook."

"Yes, 'Thello," said Laurent; "and if we could have trusted them, they might have worked in the garden."

"I quite 'gree wid you, sah," exclaimed 'Thello.

And there the matter dropped; for these were busy times. The huts required finishing; there were digging and mining to carry on in the relics of the ship, from which something useful was always brought; enough planks being secured for roofing the buildings that they erected, and proceeded to make more comfortable. Then there were gardening occupations, carried on in a kind of resigned way; for to all now it seemed evident that they should have to remain on the island for life.

Helston was busy, too, attending his patients—Grace giving him a great deal of anxiety; for she had fallen into a low state, from which he could not rouse her.

As for Deborah, her injuries had been terribly severe; and ever since their return, though Helston had done all possible, he could not feel sure that she would survive from day to day.

Everything went on in the most orderly way; and, now there was no fear of savages lurking in the bushes, parties went out gathering fruit, hunting, shooting, and fishing, while others went on preparing land, and proceeding slowly with the preparation of the ground for seed.

'Thello was always busy when not cooking, and to his brain they owed many of the conveniences they enjoyed. He it was who turned the great flat oyster shells into plates; knocked off the tops of conch shells, ground them, and made them invaluable as drinking cups, though the gourds that grew

wild were utilized to a great extent for both bottle and cup.

Since the capture of the savages, a hope had gained ground that their companions had received too severe a lesson to ever think of returning; and when the three were despatched, they, if they reached their own shores, would give, doubtless, highly-coloured accounts of the prowess of the Amazons amongst whom they had been, and so quell any desire to attack them again.

Mary Dance and Laurent met in the most quiet and matter-of-fact way, each being resigned to the position; and on all sides work seemed to be the real cure for the anomalous position in which they were all placed.

The three savages were despatched early in the morning; and after they had disappeared, watch being deemed unnecessary, all hands went cheerfully to work; and to judge from the appearance of the women, it could hardly have been imagined that they had lately been face to face with peril.

All being peaceable, then, at the camp, Helston proposed to Laurent that they should make a short expedition across the island, to see if they could discover anything in the shape of animal life that would be available for a change.

Laurent gladly accepted the proposal, and Helston turned to Mary Dance—

"You have been too much at home lately," he said. "Come, Mary, you shall pick out five of the home birds, and come with us."

Mary, however, showed so great a disinclination, that Helston said "As you will," and Laurent turned rather bitterly away.

They soon found half a dozen girls glad to be their companions; and shooting straight off across the island, they passed over stream after stream of hardened lava, till they had, about midday, got beyond the area of destruction, and found that here there was far more abundance of vegetable life than they had expected; so that Helston's spirits rose, as he felt that, would the volcano but remain quiescent, their island prison would bloom again into a perfect paradise, and abundance would reign once more.

"No fear of famine," he said, pointing to the melon-like gourds and abundant fruits upon the trees.

"No," replied Laurent; "and if the land is left at peace for a few years, it will be richer than ever."

"A few years!" exclaimed Helston, with a sigh. "Heigho, what may not a few years bring forth?"

"Let's think of the future," said Laurent.

Helston nodded, and they continued their course, whose aim was to strike the sea-shore about opposite to where they were encamped; for Helston, from what he had seen before the terrible visitation, had hopes of making a goodly find here amongst the sand, though heretofore it had slipped his memory.

He was not wrong, for on reaching the sands they proved to be the nesting place of huge turtles, whose eggs were found in abundance in their place of deposition, covered with the sand.

"We have only to come here by night, to secure as many as we want, when the reptiles come out of

the sea, and crawl up to lay their eggs. Laurent, we must come on a turtle expedition before long."

"But will it be real turtle or mock turtle, Mr. Helston?" said one of the girls.

And her curiosity was gratified amidst much laughter.

Loading themselves with as many turtles' eggs as they could carry, they then set off back, to get within reach of the great rock hut just as a score of frightened women ran up from the sands, crying out—

"The savages are come—the savages!"

Helston and Laurent ran the rest of the distance with all their might, getting to the hut as the short tropic twilight was falling; and there, as the women gathered—well armed now—for the fresh incursion, Helston found that it was but too true; for the savages seemed indeed to have made a fresh descent upon their peaceful isle, their dark forms being visible down by the breaking waves.

"We've done wrong, Helston," said Laurent, grasping a keen sword.

"I'm afraid so," said Helston. "The scoundrels we were merciful to have only fetched a contingent from their own shores."

"Yes," said Laurent, "and we must drive them back."

The Egotist's Note-book.

GOING up Ludgate-hill the other day, I noticed, immediately in front of me, a man dressed as a labourer, and carrying a brown paper bag in his hand. A young fellow in a butcher's blouse was talking to him; and just as I came up, the butcher boy said, rather earnestly—

"Why, the bird's worth a sovereign. Don't you part with him for less."

"What's the good of it to me?" replied the labourer. "I'll sell it anybody for seven-and-six."

I knew that these observations were intended for me; but I had been in the bird fair at Bethnal-green too often not to perceive at a glance that the "beautiful canary" was only a painted sparrow. On my casually hinting as much, the boy in the blouse and the well-got-up labourer rapidly disappeared amongst the crowd of foot passengers. I noticed, a day or two since, that a couple of these worthies—a labourer, of course, and a confederate—were brought up at Guildhall charged with endeavouring to perpetrate a fraud of this kind; but as the labourer was acute enough to let the bird fly when he was taken into custody, the magistrate was compelled to discharge him for want of evidence.

They want a Howard in the United States. The descriptions of gaol life, published on official authority, would be simply shocking, if they had not a humorous side. Even in New York, every form of licence is practised, and a prison is a regular pandemonium. In one case, the turnkey is a constant prisoner, who contrives to be re-committed immediately on the termination of his sentence, and by pandering to the vices of the other criminals

makes a very profitable business for himself and the keeper. In Albany Gaol, where the prisoners are supplied with excellent hot meals, one vagabond informed the chaplain that, having now found a prison to suit him, he did not intend to leave it permanently as long as he lived. But in Massachusetts the officials have tried the experiment of imposing manual labour as a punishment, with most satisfactory results. They say that they compelled every able-bodied prisoner to work, even if it took two men and a dog to make him do it.

A well-known surgeon was attending to a patient in the accident ward of his hospital. The doctor knew nothing of the poor sufferer, whose right wrist was badly dislocated.

"See," said he, "I don't understand how your accident happened, nor how the muscles were moving. Will you kindly put your arm in the position it was in when the affair occurred?"

The patient instinctively obeyed, and painfully stretched out his hand to the surgeon's watch-pocket!

I have often wondered why it was that some ingenious person did not contrive something for the benefit of travellers in place of the eternal sandwich and the melancholy, indigestible, hard-boiled egg. For my part, I remember at the autumn manœuvres filling a flask with egg beaten up with milk, sugared and salted and brandied to taste; and I should be afraid to say how many miles I tramped on that nutritious draught. The idea has been capitally taken up at last by a company—"Liebig's Liquid Essence of Beef and Tonic Wine Company"—who, in addition to ordinary bottles of their tonic wine, have now placed before the public, in cleverly contrived little flasks, whose stopper is a drinking glass, a certain amount of a combination of wine and beef in a most palatable form. Here, then, is a great want supplied; for with a few hard biscuits, and one of the Tonic Wine Company's flasks, one might take the longest of railway journeys, independent of the desolate refreshment bars, and come out at the end energetic, untired, and ready for the postponed meal, instead of having annoyed the internal regions with dog-eared insults of bread and ham, or the dire pastry productions and liquids vended to pilgrims of the iron road. Of the other suitable applications of this ingenious and agreeable combination, every mind must supply an endless number.

THE morality of the business world may be considered at a very low ebb, when almost directly a new article has been introduced, and is by universal consent considered a success, worthless imitations of it appear. These imitators trade upon the reputation gained by the original invention, and if not narrowly watched bring it into bad repute. Imitations are in existence of the "New Patent Stocking Suspender," the only safeguard being the name of Almond stamped on every clasp and on the band. Every lady desiring health and comfort should provide herself with a pair of these useful articles, which may be obtained of Mr. H. J. Almond, 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, E.C. Ladies' size, post free, 3s. 2d. per pair. Size of waist required.

Attacked by Indians.

INDIANS? Artemus Ward was about right when he said "Injuns is pison."

Yes, I've had some experience of them, and don't mind telling you two or three bits of adventures, if you like to call them so.

I remember, about ten years ago, I was on my way through Kansas, on the overland coach. We had come from Frisco, and had a long journey before us; for in those days we did not go by rail.

It was a pleasant journey, though, for the lumbering coach went well along the track, marked here and there by the skulls and bones of the unfortunate oxen that had broken down and died of thirst, probably, while dragging some dray.

For our coach, which carried the mails, we had six good horses for a team at a time, and a driver who knew how to handle them, and send them spinning along, and it was good for us that he did.

For my own part, I had been rather given to thinking of Indians as people of the past, and I felt disposed to smile when I saw a sergeant and a dozen men, with their rifles, climb on to the roof of the great coach.

"What's that for?" I said. "Got a prisoner?"

The driver looked at me for a moment, spat, and then said, briefly—

"Injuns!"

"What, do you mean there is any danger from Indians?" I said.

"Lots," he replied; "so if you've got shootin' irons, see as they're fit."

I noticed that my fellow-passengers rather ostentatiously displayed their large Colt's revolvers; so as I happened to be furnished with a pair, I saw that they were loaded, and stuck them in my belt.

That night we had the prairie on fire. Fortunately for us, the grass was short, and there was no danger.

"Ah," said one passenger, "it looks as if we had run through it, and it was following us. There is little, if any, danger from a fire on this prairie, where the grass is short. It is the prairie of longer grass, and high, dry weeds, as high as yourself, which on fire, with a fair wind, leaves no escape for the luckless mortal untimely caught in it. Such fires, however, are incidents of the past."

At one place we stopped at I had the pleasure of admiring a water tank, a small dépôt, and one house, a "prairie schooner." The owners of the latter were leisurely dressing on the open prairie, on which their horses were breakfasting. A "prairieschooner," I may explain, is the covered wagon of "mover," "colonist," "emigrant," or "prospecting party," as those going west to settle are variously named. When we get away from dépôts we are left with prairie and sky for sights. No life is in view.

"I am looking to see something alive," said one of our party, but his eyes were not gratified with such a sight. Much of this trip is of this kind. The prairie is not all flat, but rolling like ocean.

It is not the buffalo season, and, consequently, we do not see a single buffalo. We see miles of burnt prairie, and, at some dépôts, piles of buffalo bones for shipment east. We begin, by and by, to

pass villages of prairie dogs, herds of cattle, cattle ranches, and corrals. At one point six antelopes, scared by the coach, canter off in line, gracefully, to a safe distance, and turn and look at us. One we see tethered at a dépôt. They are graceful animals—so pretty, indeed, and with such innocent ways, that it seems almost an outrage to shoot them.

Suddenly, as we were cantering over the prairie, with a long low range of trees on our left, the driver called out—

"Don't be skeared, gents, but I think I see an Injin scout."

We all looked in the direction indicated by his whip, but could see nothing, only rolling plains and barren hills; so, after examining our firearms, we took to loading our interrupted pipes once more, and began to emit tobacco smoke in the place of that of gunpowder.

"False alarm, driver," I said.

"Wall, I dunno," he said, "per'aps it weer, per'aps it weern't. There's no harm in being ready for the varmint, is there, sergeant?"

"Not a bit," said that worthy. "All the same, I think you were wrong, cunngle."

"Well, as I said afore, per'aps I weer, per'aps I weern't. Gee, hilli, boys—whoo-oop!"

This last was to the horses, and accompanied by a shake of the reins, when the dashing team broke into a canter, and off we went.

"Do the Indians ever interfere with the coaches?" I said, "or is it all tales?"

"Don't they just," said the driver; and my fellow-passengers pricked up their ears. "Why, stranger, the wonder is when we get across the prairie without being meddled with; and—whoo-oop, boys—go along, hosses. Jee-rewsalem, who's right now?"

"Why, you are, cunngle," said the sergeant, seizing his rifle, and his men did the same.

For on the slope of one of the low hills to our left, there, plainly enough, was a group of Indians, evidently watching us; and as we advanced, the track going about a quarter of a mile from where they were clustered, they began to move down.

They were on foot, and we knew that with a few shots we could pass them if they were pugnacious; but, unfortunately, just then there appeared, coming quickly over the hill, quite a cloud of well-mounted, nearly naked horsemen, their copper-hued skins shining in the sun, and their long, feather-ornamented hair streaming out behind, like the manes and tails of their half-wild horses.

Here and there, one of them seemed to wear buck-skin fringed trousers; but for the most part, their clothing was a narrow loin cloth, and the fringed sling, passing over their right and under their left shoulder, to support the quiver of keenly pointed arrows.

For every man carried a bow, apparently his sole weapon, as far as we could see.

"What's to be done, sergeant?" I said, as the driver urged on his horses at a lively gallop.

"Fight, or give in," was the reply. "If we fight, we may get away; if we don't, we're sure not to, for they'll scalp us to a man."

"Let's fight, then," I said.

"But what's it to be?" said the driver, who kept

urging on his horses, till the stage rocked and threatened to overturn. "Is it to be fight standin' up or layin' down; full stop, or go ahead as hardas we can go?"

"Fight running," said the sergeant.

"No, no," said one of the passengers; "let's stop the coach, and fight from its shelter. We can take good aim then."

"Stranger," said the sergeant, "if we do that, it's only keeping off the varmint for an hour or two, and then they'll kill us to a man. Why, if we run, gents, we shall soon leave the unmounted men behind, and only have the horsemen to deal with. If we stop, we've got both."

"But if any one falls as we are going—any one wounded?" said a passenger, whose hand trembled visibly as he played with his revolver.

"The Lord have mercy upon him, amen!" said the sergeant, solemnly, "for the Injuns won't. Can't help that, sir—he must be left behind. It will be every man for himself; for if any one falls off the coach, it can't be stopped for him. There's no choice, sir."

"The sergeant's right," said half a dozen voices. "They'd only shoot our horses, and have us helpless. Go on, driver."

"If they don't shoot 'em now," said the sergeant, between his teeth.

"All right, gents," said the driver; "only, for your own sakes, bring down any varmint as is making a set at me or my hosses. Gee, boys, go along!"

He gave his reins another shake, and, fast as we were going before, it was quite time to increase the pace, for the Indians were running hard to intercept us, and the horsemen were coming over the hills in an ever-increasing crowd.

Their aim was to cut us off; but we were going at such a rate that the chance for the unmounted men was soon gone by, and, as the horsemen were behind, we had a good start.

But this was only a momentary advantage, for their horses were fresh, while ours were tired with travel; and though the Indian horses had each to bear the burden of a man, ours had to drag the great lumbering coach, with its load of about thirty people and the heavy mails.

We thundered along, every man with his finger on the trigger of Colt or rifle, and it soon became evident that the Indians were gaining upon us; but so far there had been no firing.

"We must not waste a shot, the sergeant had shouted.

There was nothing now to fear from the pursuers on foot, but the mounted men kept on increasing, until they must have numbered hundreds; and as they came nearer, we could read our fate in their savage, merciless countenances and rolling eyes.

"Well, sergeant," said one of the passengers, "I don't seem to care about my scalp hanging at the waist-belt of either of those 'coons, so, as soon as you're ready to give the word, I want to begin firing."

"Wait a little longer, squire," said the sergeant, "and leave the first part to us. We've got rifles,

and you only six-shooters. We'll do the long range; you wait for the close-quarter work."

"Right," said my companion, who had been leaning out of the window to speak.

And he could not deny the wisdom of the advice, which he distributed to his companions as he drew in his head.

As for me, I was seated beside the driver; and, as I held my revolver ready, I could not help admiring the cool, steady way in which he settled down to his work, sending the horses along at a splendid swinging gallop, which gave the Indians all their work to keep up with.

But they came on, as inexorable as fate; and the next minute the sergeant gave the word, and his men began firing fast, picking out the leading Indians, and rolling them over one after the other; for there was such a crowd that every shot seemed to tell.

It made very little difference, though, to the pursuit—only increased the number of savage yells that came after us, savage enough to curdle the blood in our veins.

I turned and stood up to watch the pursuit as the sergeant and his men kept on steadily firing, he talking the while he worked, and keeping on warning his men not to waste a shot.

But I soon had my own work cut out; for the Indians urged on their beasts to a furious gallop, overtook us, and galloped along side by side with the coach, some of the more adventurous racing on, to come over the hill to cut us off at a curve.

Revolvers were now in full use; and I brought down two savage wretches who came on my side, and tried to send an arrow through the driver.

"Thanky, squire," said the driver to me, as the most dangerous of the two went down, and the other fell back on his horse's croup. "That 'coon had got my range, and I was looking down the arrow right at him."

At this moment the Indians let fly a volley of arrows, and one man fell back on the coach dead, while another slipped off, wounded, was just missed by the wheels, and, as we dashed on, was pounced upon by the Indians, who carried him off in triumph, poor wretch! to a death of torment unspeakable.

But this incident did not interfere with the continuance of the fight, for though three or four went off in triumph with their prisoner, at least two hundred kept on plying us with their arrows, inflicting terrible wounds, while dozens stuck in and about the coach.

Fortunately for us, they did not think to fire at the horses, their sole efforts, in their rage, being directed at the men, who kept on firing with deadly certainty, bringing down enemy after enemy, but having no effect whatever on the Indians in regard to their pursuit.

"Come, sergeant," panted the driver, "you must beat 'em off; my horses can't stand this much longer."

"Fire away, my lads," cried the sergeant. "Fire low, gents, and make every shot tell."

We obeyed his order, and a tremendously effective fusillade was kept up, strewing the way with the bodies of Indians and their horses; but still they

kept up the chase, yelling, urging on their horses, and discharging their arrows with relentless force.

"Hold hard," said the sergeant all at once. "Every man be ready, and don't fire till I give the word. As for yew, squire, let 'em get a little more on to us. Ease your horses a bit, but directly we fire, give 'em gosh again, and go away like the wind."

His orders were not questioned, and the horses were slackened in their speed, with the effect that our pursuers, believing that we had exhausted our ammunition, came crowding on after us, getting together and preparing for a rush, yelling savagely the while.

"Pick out the thick of 'em, my lads," said the sergeant suddenly, when at the distance of ten or a dozen yards the Indians were preparing to give us another flight of arrows, and I shuddered at the bloodthirsty looks of the wretches.

"Thick of it, it is," said half a dozen voices.

"Fire!" cried the sergeant.

We had just time to draw trigger before the arrows came, and our tremendous volley made a regular heap of dead and dying, every shot seeming to tell, while at the same moment the horses darted off, and the coach soon left the fiends behind, utterly discouraged by the terrible havoc of our last fire.

"Saved," cried the sergeant, reloading. "They won't have any more to-day, thank you."

And so it proved, for we saw no more of the wretches, who had killed three of our party and seriously wounded seven.

"Just like children, hitting at what hits them," said the sergeant. "If they had shot at our horses, we must have been killed to a man or else taken."

"And what then, sergeant?"

"Scalped, or pegged down to the earth and burned," he replied.

"Surely, not so horrible a death as that?"

"Just you wait till we get a bit smoothed down after this ruffling, stranger," he said, "and I'll tell you one or two things about that."

And in the course of our journey, which was uninterrupted the rest of the way, he kept his word.

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER XXII.—THE PLANNING OF A JOURNEY.

KATE TOWNSEND and her father looked in a puzzled way in the face of Wallace Foster as, after a certain amount of prefatory matter, he proceeded to unfold his projects.

"You see, Mr. Townsend," he said, "I have been always somewhat of a dreamer, for I have distrusted my powers as a plodding commercial man."

"Ah, my lad," said Mr. Townsend, "there's so much competition nowadays, that the most able traders cannot always succeed. But go on."

He had no need to urge the young man, for his eyes had wandered off to Kate.

"To be sure, yes," he exclaimed. "Well, sir, I have been, as an engineer, a student of geology."

"Exactly, so as to study formation of soil in case you are road or bridge making, tunneling, and so on."

"Well, sir, I have been studying the formation of the soil on the Mexican and Texas borders, and the border lands of Upper California."

"And you think you have found gold again, eh?" said Mr. Townsend, smiling. "Delusive hopes—delusive hopes."

"No, sir," said Wallace, quietly; "but next door to it."

"What, silver?"

"Yes, silver," said Wallace, calmly.

And Kate's eyes sparkled as she gazed at the frank, earnest young fellow, whose love she owned, proud to find how true he had been, and careless of her change of position.

"But, my dear boy, how can you, staying here in New York, find silver out in the Far West?"

"That's the mystery of the thing, sir," said Wallace. "You see, sir, I've had this always before my eyes. You have lost your fortune, and this has necessitated a very humble style of living for your daughter."

"Mr. Foster," said the old man, hotly, "you insult me."

"Nothing could be farther from my thoughts, sir," said the young man, firmly. "Hear me out. This being the case, I felt that it was my duty, instead of settling down to a plodding engineer, to try and replace her in her former position; and that I mean to do."

He spoke with such calm decision, that Mr. Townsend was astonished. Then, leaning forward, he took the young man's hand, and shook it warmly.

"I beg your pardon, Foster—I beg your pardon," he said, eagerly. "I am old, and fretful, and hasty."

"And you do not thoroughly know me yet, Mr. Townsend," said the young man, smiling. "Some day I hope you will bless and trust me as freely as dear Kate here does."

"I shall from henceforth," said Mr. Townsend, warmly. "There, my boy, go on with your projects."

"Well, sir," said Wallace, opening a roll of State maps that he had brought with him, and which he laid upon the table, keeping the corners down with books, "I have been studying the geology of the country, and you will observe here where I stick pins."

Father and daughter leaned eagerly over the map as the young man went on.

"Well, sir, you see here the various formations of the mountains is marked out—granite, slate, gneiss, sandstone, and the rest of it."

Mr. Townsend nodded, and Kate rested her hands on his shoulder.

"Then, as you know, sir, in these various ranges as I have also marked, gold has been found. Gold here, gold there, and there, and there."

Mr. Townsend nodded, deeply interested, as the young man pointed out the various points.

"Every one, sir, has sought gold, only few silver. But especially in Nevada, wherever silver has been sought for, it has well recompensed the searchers."

"Gold so much more attractive," said Mr. Townsend, nodding.

"Exactly," said Wallace. "Well, sir, I have been

studying the formations where silver has been found and is mined for, and comparing the mountain ranges with those farther south—lesser ranges and spurs of the mountains by the gulches and cañons—and I feel convinced that on several places I could go and put my hand on spots where the rock teems with silver."

"Without first going to prove it," said Mr. Townsend, dubiously.

"Yes, sir, without first going to prove it. In fact, if I saw that a certain tract of land containing certain formations was for sale, I should secure that tract of land, even if it was so much desert—in fact, then the more readily, as it would be bought for a song."

Mr. Townsend shook his head.

"Gambling, my lad, gambling," he said.

"No, sir, not at all," continued the young man; "but the result of study. Here is the geographical map, and I find here marked, 'elevated range, granite.' Good. Then suppose I wanted to obtain felspar, should I be wrong in buying that bit of granite wilderness, when I know that it is one of nature's laws that felspar shall be found as one of the compounds of granite? Again, sir, serpentine is marked here. Good. I want steatite or soapstone, say. Well, that is always found in connection with serpentine. Should I be wrong, then, in buying a tract of land that teems with serpentine rock?"

"Humph," said Mr. Townsend, "I suppose not."

"Good, then," said Wallace; "I find here in Nevada certain rocks, and from these silver in abundance is procured."

Mr. Townsend nodded approval.

"Well," continued Wallace, "I go then far south to Mexico, where, in connection with certain rocks, silver is found in abundance."

"Yes," said Mr. Townsend.

"Very well, then," said Wallace, growing warmer as he went on; "I take the map then, and I find imperfectly noticed on the border lands of California and Mexico, traces of these same rocks, unexplored, unnoticed. The probability is, that the country is divided into ranches, where cattle-breeding is carried on, and no one ever dreams of the silver beneath the rock—riches that I could stake my existence are there waiting to be utilized."

"Well," said Mr. Townsend, whose countenance had undergone a great change, "what do you propose doing?"

"Going there, exploring, waiting my time, and then purchasing some tract of desert, as some people would call it; or taking up a large claim from the Government, when I see the place that suits me."

"Have you any money?" said Mr. Townsend.

"About three thousand dollars," said the young man.

"Good," said Mr. Townsend, "that ought to suffice. I wish I had three thousand dollars."

"Why?" said Wallace, smiling, as he looked at the old man.

"Because I should join you," was the reply, "and share your prosperity."

"You think I am right, then?" said the young man, joyously.

"Yes, I feel no doubt about it, if the maps are correct."

"Oh, I believe they are right," said Wallace, confidently. "And now, Kate, I am going to propose something that I fear will cause you pain."

"What is that?" faltered Kate, turning pale.

"I shall have to leave you for some months."

"No, no—don't do that," cried Kate, excitedly. "I should never feel safe. That man—"

"Nonsense, child," said Mr. Townsend. "How can you fear him now? You will never see him again."

"If Wallace went away," said Kate, excitedly, "I should be in fear every day. I know we shall meet some day, and I would rather Wallace gave up everything than left us."

"Well," said Mr. Townsend, musingly, "I am getting tired of New York, it is nothing to me now."

"Then you would go and live somewhere else, papa, while Wallace was gone?" said Kate.

"Yes, my dear."

"But suppose he should follow us?" cried Kate. "Oh, papa!"

"Do you know, my dear," said the old man, smiling, "I fancy a trip out West would do us both good. We are suffering from nerves."

"Do you mean, Mr. Townsend," cried Wallace, eagerly, "that you would accompany me?"

"I don't see why not," said the old man. "And if the land turns out as you hope, I don't know why I should not invest in it the wreck of my bit of property."

Wallace clasped the old man's hand in his.

"Thanks for your confidence in me, sir," he said.

"But I'm greatly afraid, my lad, that we should be terribly in the way."

"In the way, sir?" cried Wallace, with a glance at Kate. "How can you say that?"

The result of the conversation was that, a few weeks afterwards, the little party, well prepared for their journey, joined an expedition bound for a part of the way in the same direction; and Kate Townsend was full of gladness, as she deemed that, once away from New York, there would be no fear of again encountering that prime object of her terror, Vasquez, the forger, who had been condemned to imprisonment for his crimes.

CHAPTER XXIII.—SI SLOCUM USES HIS RIFLE.

THERE were not half a dozen people left near when Si leaped from his horse, and found poor Jerry Blackburn, apparently dead, hanging from the branch of the tree.

"Who did this?" the trapper roared.

But there was no answer; and Si tried to climb the tree, but slipped in his haste.

He then drew up his mustang, mounted and stood upon its back, knife in hand, but still failed to reach the rope.

"I shall never save him!" he groaned, leaping down.

And then, swinging round his rifle, he passed the sling over his head, cocked it, drew back a few yards, and, to the astonishment of those who looked on, he took careful aim at the rope by which Jerry hung, and fired.

The rope was cut in two about a couple of feet above the head of the black, and poor Jerry dropped on to his feet, and would have fallen forward on his face, but Si Slocum was too quick; and, darting forward, he caught the unfortunate man, and laid him gently on the ground.

"My poor old Jerry!" groaned Si, feeling his heart, after tearing the rope from his throat. "What fiends and scoundrels have done this? I reckon I'll have it outer some one 'fore I've done."

A couple of miners came and looked on as Si rubbed the poor black's throat, and poured a few drops of whiskey from his flask between the parted lips.

"Guess, stranger," said one, "yew're makin' a darned sight o' fuss over a dead nigger."

"Yes," said the other, "niggers is in plenty down furder south. Let him be, stranger; he's dead enough."

"Fuss over a dead nigger!" said Si, passionately. "Dew yew know as that poor boy had got a honest, trusty heart in his body, and that's more than three-parts of you white men can say?"

One miner laid his hand on his revolver, and the other on his knife.

"Dew yew want to fight, stranger?" said one, hotly.

"Yes," said the other; "if so, draw your weapon."

"Dew yew!" cried Si, leaping up with such fury in his countenance that the miners drew back a step.

"Guess I don't," said one; "I don't see nothin' to fight 'bout."

"No," said the other; "only yew air makin' a tarnation row 'bout your nigger."

"Who did this?" said Si—"who hung him?"

"Guess it was that darned skunk they call Coyote Tobe," said the first speaker. "He's one of a bad lot. Say, stranger, I'd shute him if I got a chance. It would be a blessing to the gulch!"

"Why, I say," said the other, "warn't it yew as plugged that rowdy Jake Bledsoe, in the bar, time back?"

"Yes," said Si, firmly, "I did. What then?"

"Guess, stranger, yew'll give me yewre fin," said the miner, holding out his hand.

"So yew will me," drawled the other. "Fight? No, I guess I don't with yew. Why, stranger, yewre a blessing to civilization, that's 'bout what yew are."

"Only I say, stranger," said the first man, "why didn't you give him another pill, and finish him?"

"Didn't it kill him, then?" said Si, joyfully.

"Kill him?—no," said the first miner, "only crippled him a bit. We were going to bury him, or hang him, I forget which, when some of his gang came down, and carried him off; and yesterday he was down here again, looking a bit white, but as full of his sass as ever."

"I'm glad I didn't kill him," said Si, who was still busy over Jerry.

"Guess yew aint no call to be," said one miner. "Guess if yew'd killed the hull gang it would have been all the better for everybody. Take a drink, stranger. Come on," said the speaker.

"No," said Si, "I can't leave the poor boy, I guess. Poor old Jerry, what shall I dew without yew?"

"Why, he aint dead, stranger," said one of the miners, laughing, though a moment before he had been scowling at Si's refusal to drink with him—about as mortal an offence as could be offered to him.

Sure enough Jerry's eyelids quivered a little, and at the end of a few moments opened, to stare round him in an unconscious manner.

Si redoubled his efforts, and gave him more whiskey, with the result that life seemed to return to the poor black's body with a rush.

All of a sudden, he sprang up, to run here and there, in a tottering way, holding his head with both hands, regardless of all that was said to him.

"Oh, golly!" he exclaimed, in a hoarse voice, "what a matter with poor nigger's head? Golly! what a matter with poor nigger's head? Dah's somefin inside um goin' roun', an' roun', an' roun', and roun'"

"Jerry," exclaimed Si, catching his arm, "don't you know me?"

"No know nothin' an' nobody," cried Jerry; "on'y somefin goin' roun', an' roun', an' roun' in poor nigger's head. Ah!"

He uttered a wild cry, for he caught sight of the dangling rope, and rushed away, to be caught by his master, who restrained him.

"No, sah—don't, sah. Nebber do so no more, sah. Don't hang poor nigger up a tree. Oh, lor! where Mass' Si Slocum? He send you all into—into fits—into—into—"

His speech trailed off as he gazed full in the face of the man who held him, and recollection by degrees so returned that he understood his position, and throwing himself at Si's feet, he embraced his legs, and began to cry like a child.

"Guess they're rum beggars, niggers," said one of the miners; but it was in a husky voice.

"I reckon," said the other rough fellow, turning away to conceal the strange moisture in his eye—"I reckon I'd give half a dozen of the biggest nuggets I've got to have anybody care for me as that nigger cares for his boss."

"I never thought as niggers had got such stuff in 'em," said the other, going up and patting Jerry on the shoulder. "Here, get up, darkey, and give's yer fin. Yew've got off fine. If that had been my neck, it would have been so stretched as it would never have come back. Here, boss, let's all liquor —darkey and all."

Si could not but feel that the stimulant would be good for Jerry, and he was anxious to have a friend or two amongst the miners; these men especially, with all their roughness, being evidently good at heart.

So he consented, and the little party adjourned to the bar, whose landlord had been saved by Si from the violence of Jake Bledsoe.

"Sir, tew yew," said the keeper of the bar, as soon as he set eyes on Si. "Glad to see yew, sir. Pray give it a name."

He shook hands solemnly with Si, and his looks conveyed the gratitude that was feebly shadowed forth in the invitation to drink.

There was a bit of a squabble about this, but the landlord insisted on his right, and the miners gave

way, merely stipulating that they should have first turn.

"Ah, stranger," said the barkeeper, "yew didn't send that bullet quite home."

"Yes, he did," said one miner, "only that fellow's got the lives of a cat."

"Hah, he's a bad 'un!" said the other miner. "Member what a smooth-faced, crop-eared rascal he was when he first come, 'fore he'd grow'd that beard?"

"Yes," said the landlord, "I guess he'd come out of the Noo York Tombs for some game or another. I hope some one will be kind enough to shoot him yet."

"Speck, sah, dat's dis chile," said Jerry, who was still rubbing his swollen neck. "I spect I gib him such a wunner as he never see afore."

"But this was another man, Jerry," said Si, quietly.

"Guess he 'serves it all de same," said Jerry. "What dey want go cheat nigger out ob him dollars, and den hang um? Oh, lor'!—oh, lor'!"

He ceased speaking, to rub his neck, looking piteously from one to the other.

"Thar, don't look at a man like that, darkie," said one of the miners. "We ought to have helped you, I know; but somehow that thar gang's 'bout too much for us, and that won't be no peace till they're exterminated."

"Speck I like to 'staminante 'em," said Jerry, who, as he grew better, became more and more pugnacious. "On'y tell dis niggah whar dey am, and I—oh, what I gib 'em, you bet!"

"Their time will come, Jerry," said Si, "so hold your tongue."

"I tell you, stranger," said the barkeeper, "that if things don't mend I shall pull up stakes, and go somewhere else, for this place aint safe nohow. I feel kinder like livin' top of a volcano, as is always goin' to burst out, and erupt everybody. We want a vigilance committee here, and a few brave boys ready to see to the clearing off of rogues and rowdies."

"Say, landlord," said one of the miners, "I wouldn't talk so loud, if I was you. Some one'll hear you, you bet, and let the gang know, when I shouldn't like to be in your shoes."

"Let 'em tell the gang, I don't care," said the landlord; "I'm 'bout sick of being bullied and shot at. I've two bullets under my skin now."

"Wal," said one of the miners, "that thar gang's allus going it too fast, and 'tis time they were stopped; but whar are yew goin' to get a leader for a vigilance committee?"

"Thar he stands," said the landlord; "that's him."

He pointed to Si, who started back in astonishment.

"Good for you, landlord," said one of the miners. "You've hit the right nail on the head. Stranger, here's to the vigilance committee and its new leader."

He had his glass nearly to his lips, when, glancing beyond Si Slocum, he saw Coyote Tobe and several members of the gang, among whom was Jake Bledsoe, enter the bar.

The landlord turned pale, and the miner's glass stopped; but colouring the next moment, he drained

his glass, and his companions followed his example, while the landlord flushed a fierce red as he stooped down, ostensibly to put away a couple of glasses, but really to see that a couple of revolvers were ready to his hand.

"Who's talking about vigilance committees?" said Coyote Tobe, swaggering up to the bar, followed by Jake Bledsoe, who no sooner caught sight of Si than he made a half-step back.

"We was," said the landlord, sternly; "for we think it's time as respectable people was—"

"Mass' Si, Mass' Si Slocum," roared Jerry, "dat's de fellow as hung dis chile, and de— Oh, you yaller face ruffymum!"

As he spoke, he made a dash at the desperado, who drew a revolver, presented it, and would have fired, had not Si struck up his hand, when the bullet flew through the roof.

Weapons of War.

THE Italian Government, it is said, is about to build a ship to be plated with three feet of armour, to carry 150-ton guns, and to sail at the immense speed of eighteen knots. Such a vessel is a critical one to build; but that it should be attempted indicates what are the qualities in which it has up to the present time been supposed that naval strength lies. Nor can there be any question that, so far as the issue can be made to depend upon a direct conflict between ships and guns, the advantage must lie with the biggest ships and the heaviest guns. One alternative, indeed, is to be introduced into the question by means of the ship which the Admiralty are about to build at the suggestion of Sir George Sartorius.

This ship is described as a kind of torpedo ram; but, so far as can be judged from the official account hitherto given of her, it will be as a ram that she will be most conspicuous. She will carry no guns, and she will be her own projectile. By the mere force of her impact, assisted probably by some torpedo action, she will deliver blows for which we have as yet relied upon heavy guns. Rams have hitherto been combined with guns, but it now seems proposed to build a ship which will be protected by armour from the fire of guns, and will rely upon her ram alone.

But while we are devising huge engines of war of this kind—for even the ram, if it is to be effective, must be a vessel of great size and power—another invention is being gradually perfected, which threatens, at least under many circumstances, entirely to neutralize them.

A torpedo may be regarded as a gun which dispenses with a gun-carriage, and which, without the vast and expensive agency of a great ship, inflicts as formidable a blow as that of the heaviest artillery. It will be sufficient to mention three kinds of torpedoes. There is, first, the "ground torpedo," which is a sort of sunken mine, exploding either by contact or by electricity. If these are judiciously laid down around a harbour or anchorage, the approach of hostile ships may, apparently, be rendered impracticable. Every channel may be protected by these hidden mines, and they may be

made so powerful that any ship under which they explode is sure to be rendered powerless.

There is, secondly, the "spar torpedo," which is carried in a boat, no matter how small, and which also explodes by contact or by electricity.

We have seen an account of experiments at Cherbourg with a torpedo boat. It was a little vessel called the *Thornycroft*, which was almost submarine. A very small part of it was above water, but it was of sufficient size to carry engines and two lateen sails, and it was worked by a lieutenant, two engineers, and a pilot.

The French admiral had two disabled ships in succession towed out to sea at a speed of fourteen knots an hour. The *Thornycroft*, however, was able to go at a rate of nineteen knots an hour—a rate not attained by any vessel in the squadron. She very soon caught up her prey, delivered her blow with a torpedo which projected from her bow, and rebounded. "A rent as big as a house" was made in the side of the ship attacked, and she sank at once.

The *Thornycroft* only spun round and round for a few moments, and then returned uninjured to the squadron from which she had started. A vessel of this kind is hardly discernible in the water; even if she were detected, she is so small that it would be difficult to hit her; and half a dozen *Thornycrofts* attacking a large vessel would be a most dangerous foe.

Their expense is quite trifling compared with that of great ships of war; they could be multiplied indefinitely, and no doubt they could be carried on board other ships, and be launched from them as occasion might require.

But even this formidable engine, which, perhaps, is as yet only in its infancy, seems surpassed in destructiveness by the Whitehead torpedoes. These are a kind of self-acting projectiles. They are some six yards long, and of the shape of a cigar, pointed at both ends. They are made in three compartments, the head containing the explosive charge, the centre being a balance-chamber, which enables them to be adjusted to travel at any depth under water, from one foot to thirty feet, and the third compartment consisting of an air-chamber, which contains engines, and compressed air to drive them. It will travel under water for a distance of 1,000 yards, and can be so set as to explode either on contact or after passing a given distance—in artillery language, either by a percussion or a time fuse. It "can be fired above the water; but will at once go to the depth it is set for, and then go straight to the object, no matter how fast the ship from which it is discharged is sailing, or how fast the object aimed at might be sailing or steaming. In fact, it could do everything but speak," and the hole it makes on striking is said to be seventy feet in area. It is evident that by this means a comparatively feeble ship, if only able to approach within 1,000 yards of a larger one, could discharge a deadly flight of unseen projectiles at her, and at night such an attack would probably be wholly unsuspected and scarcely open to resistance.

Attempts are being made to devise wire nets which may be spread around vessels at anchor; but

it seems to be thought this torpedo would break through them. Allowing, however, for the imperfection of particular inventions, there seems sufficient reason to apprehend that some of the most powerful destructive agencies will in future be lodged in small craft or submarine torpedoes, and that the guns of the most powerful vessels will be less certain in action and less deadly than these comparatively inexpensive and slight instruments.

For the purpose of defending harbours, torpedoes would appear to be almost invincible; but it seems very probable that half a dozen *Thornycrofts* or Whitehead torpedoes might prove a more formidable enemy to the *Devastation* than the *Dandolo* and the *Duilio* combined.

Lord Charles Beresford suggests that every great ironclad ought to have attached to her two or three satellites, in the shape of very fast schooner-rigged vessels, armed with guns sufficiently powerful to keep off any vessels of their own size, and capable, therefore, of maintaining a kind of free space around the large vessels. But, at all events, he urges the importance of training a kind of torpedo corps, both among the men of our seagoing navy, and among those who are entrusted with the defence of our coasts. It is everything in such a matter to be prepared beforehand, and whether or not we rely largely in the future on torpedoes, we certainly ought to be able to protect ourselves against them, and to make any possible use of them.

Three Hundred Virgins. A TALE OF THE SOUTHERN SEAS.

CHAPTER XLIV.—TROUBLES IN CAMP.

LOUD cries from the camp lent wings to the feet of the little party, the girls keeping up with their stronger companions wonderfully well; and, to their great delight, they reached their defences to find all on the alert, but that the attack had not yet been made.

It was growing too dark for them to make out the numbers of the savages, but at the side of a sandy point one of their canoes was plainly visible, and the figures of the savages moving excitedly here and there.

"What will be best?" said Helston, as soon as he could get breath, and when he had disposed of his little army to the best advantage, sheltering them behind rocks and stones and piled-up touchwood from the ship. "Shall we attack them boldly, and try to drive them into the sea, or await their attack?"

"Stay here, and give them a warm reception," said Laurent. "A shower of our arrows will check their advance, and if they come on, we shall have them at an advantage here."

There was so much wisdom in the proposal that Helston agreed directly; and then, with the short tropic twilight passing away, to give place to the brilliant starlit night, the whole party breathlessly awaited the coming onslaught.

There was the dull, murmuring wash of the sea, as the great heaving billows rolled over upon the

sands, and the loud chattering of voices in eager council, apparently the leaders of the savages ordering the arrangements of the attack; but though eyes were strained to the utmost, the canoes were now invisible as the savages, and the defenders of the camp had to content themselves with the warnings given from time to time to their ears.

Suddenly, hands grasped weapons eagerly, and bows were bent; for from about a hundred yards in front came a loud yell, and the figures of the savages dancing about and brandishing their weapons were indistinctly seen.

There was another yell, and Helston gave a loud warning to those under his command.

"Let no arrow fly till they are close in, and then shoot low."

Another yell was uttered, this time much nearer.

"Dat's dat crook-nose savage black!" cried 'Thello; "I knows him, and gib him one when he come nigh; and— Oh, golly!" cried 'Thello, after a momentary pause, and he roared with laughter—"taint no fight at all, only dem black fellow come back wid loads of fish."

"What?" exclaimed Helston, straining his eyes, which were not so able to penetrate the darkness as those of the African. "Why, 'Thello, you're right. Don't shoot—don't shoot!"

And, leaping over the stones which formed the extemporized breastwork, he went cautiously forward, dreading treachery.

Immediately on his appearance there was a burst of chattering in front, and Helston shouted out that there was no danger.

'Laurent, 'Thello, and a dozen of the more curious of the women ran out, to find the three savages returned, departure having been far enough from their thoughts; and in a few minutes it became evident that the poor fellows had imagined that they were sent off merely on a fishing expedition, from which they had now returned.

Their delight was like that of children, as seizing the three men of the party, and shouting in their language to the women to come on, they dragged the leaders down to where they had beached their canoe, flourishing their paddles as they went, and little thinking how nearly they had suffered immolation on the altar of their captors' fears.

On reaching the spot where the canoe was beached, Helston found that it was so loaded with fish that the wonder was how the savages had managed to land with it in safety.

They now made signs for all to help them, and the little canoe was drawn up on the sands, far beyond the reach of the tide; while upon the fish being thrown out upon the sands, they were found to be of a larger and finer description than those generally caught by the women close in shore.

The savages danced about with delight, like children, on seeing how their gift was appreciated; ending by giving up their paddles to Laurent, and the fishing line, carefully dried and wound up, to Helston, before going to help 'Thello, who set to work at once, with half a dozen of the women, cleaning the fish, and lighting fires for a big roast.

"Better eat um to-night, sah," he said. "Wid dis hot night cumin', I no tink dey good for much to-

morrow. Affer dis, I tink we best go to work make plenty salt."

"Hello's proposal was met with alacrity by the women, and the turtles' eggs, being keepable, were put into store for another meal.

"Then we are to have a feast instead of a fight, Helston?" said Laurent, laughing.

"So it seems," was the reply. "But in the name of common sense, what do these creatures mean by coming back? Don't they want their liberty?"

"It seems they are quite content with their position here, and look upon themselves as belonging to us," replied Laurent. "Depend upon it, they will want to stop altogether. They would be very useful."

"Yes," said Helston, "if we could feel safe; but suppose they rise against us?"

"I don't think there is any fear of that," said Laurent. "You see, they were completely beaten, and they are so child-like in their nature that they are quite willing to accept their position. I don't think we need fear them. On the contrary, they would, I fancy, prove very trustworthy, looking up to us, as they do, as a race of superior beings."

"Well, we will try them in the morning," said Helston.

Just then he was touched on the shoulder by one of the girls.

"Mary Dance thinks you had better come, sir, and see Deborah Burrows. She has been very strange all day."

Helston hurried off, to find Deborah lying, tossing restlessly on her couch of dried sea-weed, in a little hut that had been hastily constructed of stones and lava. A lamp, composed of a shallow shell, in which a fibre wick was burning in the melted fat of sea birds, shed a pale light through the place, making Deborah's face more ghastly, even while it shone upon the glossy hair of Grace Monroe, who was seated by the poor creature's side.

Mary Dance met Helston at the threshold, and told how restless and wild their patient had been for some hours past, and that some great change had taken place—whether for good or bad she could not tell.

As Helston approached, Grace, who seemed very weak, rose to go; but the young doctor took her hand in his, and gently forced her back into her seat.

"It is only the doctor, Grace Monroe," he said, coldly; "there is no occasion for you to go."

As he spoke, Deborah, who had turned her head sharply on hearing his voice, raised herself upon her elbow and glared at him, her eyes seeming to glow in the intensity of their gaze; and as he now turned to her, she sprang at him, and caught him by the throat with all a maniac's strength, and held him, almost helpless, unless he exerted his strength to her injury.

"Come, come, Deborah," he said, soothingly, as he caught her wrists in his, and tried to pacify her, while, with a faint cry of fear, Mary Dance seized her round the waist—"come, this is folly. Here, let me lay you down."

The positions were reversed, for the poor creature made so fierce an onslaught that, in spite of Mary Dance's efforts, Helston was forced backwards, De-

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borah holding him firmly, as she kept on talking wildly.

"You did not know how I hate you," she muttered. "You have caused all my misery; and not content with torturing my spirit, you have tortured my body. You coward—you cruel coward! Mary Dance, Grace Monroe—you puling, smooth-faced doll—come and help me, and we'll crush out his cowardly life! Do you hear me? He is only a man. Here—quick—he cannot help himself, and we can crush out his coward life, and bury him in the sands."

"Deborah, Deborah! loose your hands," panted Mary, straggling vainly with the infuriated maniac.

"Yes, when he's dead," she said, in a harsh voice. "You don't know him as I do. He has been by my side night and day, forcing great pieces of rock into my hands, and telling me to crush the heads of the different women he hated. He is not fit to live, I tell you. He wanted me to kill Grace Monroe, and held my hands over her head while she was sleeping—hands holding a great stone, and then forced me to throw it, and I did."

"But stop," she cried, suddenly, loosening her hold upon Helston; "how is it you came back to life?"

She stood pointing at Grace, and held one hand to her forehead.

"I know I killed you," she said, hoarsely, and speaking in a dreamy, confused way; "and then you followed me into the mountain, and haunted me, until you nearly drove me mad. No, you are not alive. But you are," she cried, turning furiously upon the man she had so passionately loved; "and you shall die, even if you haunt me as she does. Yes, two of you—two ghosts. I don't care! Then you may marry and be happy as spirits, and I can laugh at you."

She threw herself, with a bound like a tigress, once more at Helston's throat; but this time he was aware of her design, and contrived to catch her wrists in his hands, turning her so deftly that he was able to throw her back upon her bed, and, with the help of Mary Dance, held her there, at the expense of great exertion, as she heaved and struggled, and at times almost mastered them, for Grace could only look on, weeping, and unable, through weakness, to lend any aid.

"Can you not do anything, sir?" exclaimed Mary Dance, piteously.

And she turned her troubled face, covered with perspiration, towards Helston.

"Nothing," he replied. "Even if I had all the resources of a surgery at my back, instead of being without the simplest appliance, I could not do much. I have no medicine, sedative or narcotic. I am compelled to rely on nature."

As he spoke, he slightly relaxed his hold, for Deborah had closed her eyes, and, apparently exhausted, lay without struggling.

"If sleep will only come," he continued, "her brain may be less disturbed afterwards; but this is a terrible position, and I can do no more."

At that moment a terrible spasm seemed to affect the prostrate woman, and, with a wild shriek, she struggled up, and threw back those who held her;

and before they could regain their mastery over her, she struck them back with almost superhuman force, and dashed wildly from the hut.

Helston leaped up, with his mouth bleeding from the blow inflicted upon him, and dashed in pursuit, followed by Mary Dance; while Grace covered her face with her hands, and wept bitterly, accusing herself of being the cause of the poor creature's misery, and telling her heart that if Deborah Burrows died the death would be laid at her door.

Meanwhile, Helston had rushed out into the dark night, to see on his left the glow of two fires reflected on a crowd of faces, where 'Thello was busy over his culinary operations.

It stood to reason that Deborah would not have run in that direction, so he rushed in the other, and stopped to listen; but there was not a sound to be heard, the soft sand completely hushing the footsteps of any one running from where he stood.

There was a faint glow spread far beyond him, showing the wild grass and growth of the sands, and the bushes and stunted trees farther from the shore; but there was no sign of his patient.

Going towards the sea, where the sands grew firmer, there was the dull roar and moan of the waves; but no Deborah.

Running back, he summoned Laurent and a score of the women, the three savages coming uninvited; but as soon as it was explained to them by signs what was wanted, they entered readily into the search, and were always first.

But in the darkness Helston felt that it was all so much labour in vain; and at last, weary and dispirited, they all returned to the camp.

CHAPTER XLV.—FATE!

THE sun was high the next morning before the search was resumed, and then, leading a party, Helston and Laurent sought along the shore, while 'Thello, with another party, proceeded inland.

It was quite evening when they all returned, to find the women grouped together upon the beach; and on hastening up, it was to find Grace Monroe and Mary Dance carefully covering the body of the dead woman, but a few moments before thrown up by the tide at their feet.

As Helston stood the next day by the deep grave in which they had laid the body of Deborah Burrows, and thought over her career, an unbidden tear fell down upon his breast, and then he turned away, to find Grace Monroe gazing intently at him.

He directed an angry look at her, that seemed to say, "How long will you go on misjudging me?" when her appealing look disarmed him, her hands were stretched out towards him, and the next moment they were grasped in his, as he whispered to her—

"Grace, I never swerved from you even in thought."

Her reply was checked by a loud cry from some of the women, and a shout from the savages, who dashed down to the shore, leaped into one of the canoes, and began paddling away to sea; for far away in the offing there came twenty large canoes on their way to the island.

Helston's heart sank within him; but with the danger came help. Their troubles were at an end; for rounding the point came the splash of oars, and

he ran towards the water's edge, but only to stagger and nearly fall, overcome by his excitement.

In a few minutes he was surrounded by the crew of a man-of-war's cutter, whose vessel lay out of sight beyond the point, having been attracted by the light playing round the volcano by night, and the puffs of smoke emitted by day.

The frigate, for such it was, stood closer in on signals being made by the officer in charge of the boat, and the coming of the great white-winged monster effectually checked the advance of the savage war canoes, which were a few hours later out of sight.

It was strange what effect was produced upon the women by the coming of the great vessel, and the knowledge that they would now be free from their island prison. Some laughed, some wept, and it was evident that, in spite of their sufferings, they would quit the place unwillingly.

The officer who had landed was almost disposed at first to be incredulous; but there were the proofs before him of the strange story told by Helston and Laurent, and at last he put off back to the frigate.

A strong party with necessaries was soon seen returning from the vessel, and a cordial invitation to all accompanied the boats.

For the dangers and troubles of the unfortunate party were over, the captain of the man-of-war receiving all on board, where they were treated with the greatest kindness, and ultimately landed at one of the principal ports of New Zealand, where —need we tell what followed, or how Grace Monroe and Mary Dance became the happy wives of those who loved them so well?

THE END.

The Woeful Ballad of Hapless Maria and the Pretty Page who looked up too far.

IT was a hapless maiden, and her age was seventeen,
She used to live in Eaton-square—of high and stately mien;
Her young affections she did fix—so lovely, pure, and green—
Upon her mother's pretty page, as gay as e'er was seen.

This pretty page looked out afar, and went the errands near,
His salary was ten p'un' ten, he likewise had his beer.
The carriage he did ride behind, and openèd the door;
He wore three rows of buttons bright, his noble chest before.

His hands were small and delicate, when free from chaps and blains;
He washed his fresh face every day, and with his hair took pains.
That he was born of noble blood, you saw it in his foots:
His mother's name was Smith; and he—he cleaned the knives and boots.

Maria was the maiden's name—so stately, tall, and fair—

Who for her mother's pretty page so lovingly did care.

All round her waist your fingers met, if you did try to span her:

Eight hours a day she practisèd upon the grand pianner.

Young Hennery he gave the maid his heart and kisses three;

And fair Maria promisèd that she would marry he. But her father he looked thunder, and her mother black as ink,

For they saw that high-born maiden at the page to smile and wink.

The father punched the page's head—he weltered in his gore—

He paid the youth his wages, and he kicked him from the door;

When the maiden, broken-hearted, all her sorrow short did cut

By taking of a fatal plunge all in the water-butt.

Young Henry, from the area rails, did see the fatal plunge;

He dragged the hapless maiden out, and squalze her like a sponge.

He saw her two legs sticking out, as he'd ne'er seen afore;

And he stood her up upon her feet all on the kitchen floor.

Those lovers knew that they must part, while talking there alone;

And as they kissed and said adoo, they both did sigh and moan.

Young Henry tried to squeeze her dry, but wiped and squalze in vain,

For all her sorrow's floods poured out and wetted her again.

And even then, this gallant youth, he her did so admire,

He lifted her, and put her down close to the kitchen fire.

The kettle sang its cheerful song—the biler it was humming,

But before she was dry, he said good-bye, for he heard her pa a-coming.

So now you lovers, old and young, just see how cruel's fate:

Maria's pa and ma did make her change her maiden state;

In spite or sobs, and tears so bright, as tumbled down like pearl,

All at St. Peter's, Eaton-square, they sold her to an earl.

Young Hennery he see her wed, and see it with a sigh,

And on the steps at number six he laid him down to die;

Till the cook below she pitied him, and managed him to rouse,

And so he lived and married her, and keeps a public-house.

For Husband and King.

CHAPTER I.

"I HAVE no doubt, Captain Lawrence, that you are a very brave man, and a most gallant man, but this is no time for the dalliance of the idle god."

"May I ask your ladyship's pardon—I think it is. Some learned man said that love is the business of the idle, and the idleness of the busy. Your ladyship will, I hope, acknowledge that I am no idler."

"Well, Captain Lawrence," said Lady Bankes, "if I am to take your speed yesterday, when you spurred in over the bridge, as a specimen of your everyday life, certainly you are no idler."

"Your ladyship can compare the time mentioned on Sir John's despatch," said the captain, "with that of my arrival here, and you will see that I did not loiter on the road."

"My dear Lawrence," said Lady Bankes—and her rather hard, stern voice became soft, low, and musical, as she laid her hand upon the young man's arm—"I do not doubt you for a moment; you are no idler, but a brave Cavalier, true to his King and country. Forgive me if I seemed to slight one who is, I know, most attached to us all."

"Dear Lady Bankes, I have nothing to forgive," said the young man; "only as you grant that I am one of the busy, is it not fair that I should at times be idle?"

"I don't see the need," said the lady, archly.

"Indeed!" said Lawrence; "I am a fighting man—say a bow—must I not sometimes be unstrung if I am to shoot truly and well?"

"Did you say bow or beau?" said Lady Bankes, smiling.

"Oh! your ladyship tortures me," exclaimed the young man. "Let me see her, Lady Bankes, if only for ten minutes. I will ask no more. Think of the perilous times in which we live. I may not live to see her again."

"I do think of that," said Lady Bankes, gravely, "and that is why I oppose your wish. Your meeting may make my poor niece unhappy, and at a time when we have troubles enough through this civil war. Look at me, shut up here away from the dear husband by whose side I would be to counsel and aid, while I would have his protection. Young man, young man, it is far better that you should go forth a little sore at heart than bind yourself with ties that can bring nought but sorrow."

"I saw no sign of sorrow in Sir John's face when he gave me your despatch, my lady."

"No?"

"Not a sign, for there was a bright smile upon his wonted stern countenance. 'Take that to my dear, brave wife, Lawrence,' he said; 'tell her I embrace her in spirit, and pray her to be guarded and careful, for my sake.'"

"Said he that?" exclaimed Lady Bankes, with humid eyes and glowing cheek.

"Word for word, madam, as I have repeated them to you; and I envied him his position, for he had that within his breast that could always give him comfort, even in his direst need. I only said

to myself, what a cold and barren life is yours: you have none to care for you or help you in your need with comfortable words."

"There—there—there—good Lawrence!" exclaimed Lady Bankes, excitedly, "thou shalt have thy wish—for ten minutes, mind, no more—and if Avice love thee, well and good."

"Oh, thanks, dear Lady Bankes," cried the young man, kissing her hand.

"Stop," said Lady Bankes, "and give me your hand. There," she said, pressing upon it a long, warm kiss, "take that to my husband. Tell him I pressed upon the honest hand so soon to be laid in his, a true wife's kiss, full of all love and honour for her noble lord. Tell him I will be guarded for his sake, and that before a rebel foot shall step within the gates of Corfe Castle, the walls shall have begun to crumble down upon their defenders' heads, and she who guarded them not have breath left to say a defiant word."

Captain Lawrence stood gazing with admiration at the glowing, handsome woman who stood before him.

"But surely, dear Lady Bankes, if it should happen that the Roundheads approached the castle, you would not resist?"

"Not resist?—not resist? Good luck, sir, for what do you take me?"

"For a most brave and noble lady," was the reply.

"Then, as a brave woman, would I, in my husband's absence, let them taste the cheer without, for not a man should taste within. Enough, though; you have your letters. Now ride away, and let my dear lord be happy in the knowledge that there is a place of safety for him in Purbeck's Isle whene'er he likes to seek for rest."

"But Mistress Avice—your ladyship's promise?" said the young man.

"There, out upon the love-sick boy!" laughed Lady Bankes. "There, you shall have your ten minutes, but not a second more."

She swept from the room, and Captain Lawrence strode up and down the low-ceiled wainscoted chamber, full of odd nooks and corners, with deep mullioned windows, filled half-way down with stained glass, the other half giving a picturesque view over wall and moat, across the little town to the sea, all dancing in the light. There were five full-length portraits of knights and ladies fitting in the sombre panels of the room; a rich Eastern carpet about half covered the floor, which, where left bare, was of polished oak. Altogether, the place would have looked stiff and formal but for the tambour frame with its wool in gay colours, work table, and scraps of feminine finery, and other traces of a gentler occupation than that which the habitation of man alone would have displayed.

After pacing up and down a few times, Captain Lawrence paused in front of a large Venetian mirror, which reflected his form from head to foot; but he had stopped inadvertently, and saw it not—in fact it was a half-front that he presented to the glass, and his eyes were directed to another part of the room, not that they saw aught, for it was all introspective, and a very different form to his own was mirrored to his gaze. But the reader may take

some interest in the young man's personal appearance, so we sketch the reflection shown within the glass:—A tall, well-built Cavalier of eight-and-twenty, with broad white forehead, clear grey eyes gleaming from beneath level, dark brows, complexion browned by the sun where his hat left it free, heavy moustache, firm mouth, pointed beard, and long clustering ringlets thrown back to hang upon his shoulders. His costume was of russet velvet, well rubbed and worn; a broad lace collar lay over upon his shoulders, long buff boots were drawn up to his thighs, and his heels were armed with goodly spurs. A broad belt crossed one shoulder, and supported a heavy rapier; and in the hand, whose arm bore a long horseman's cloak, dusty and travel-stained like the doublet, was a broad, plumed hat, with a bullet hole in one side, and an ostrich feather cut off short by the sweep of an enemy's trenchant blade.

"I hope Captain Lawrence thinks he looks well this morning," said a merry voice.

And the young man started, dropping hat and cloak, to run and catch the hands of her who had entered so silently.

Such a pretty, arch brunette face it was that looked up in his, with laughing eyes and dark chestnut hair, and a maze of wondrous curls shaken from her sunny brow. Dress, figure—he could see nothing but that sweet laughing face, over which a warm flush spread, burned into her cheeks by his ardent gaze, and soon she tried to withdraw her hands which he so tightly held.

"Dearest Avice!" he said, in a low, hoarse voice, and was silent.

"Fie, Captain Lawrence," she answered. "Dearest, indeed! What would Aunt Bankes say? And how solemn and mumchance you look. Did your supper disagree with your lordship, or did you see the Lady Purbeck's ghost come stiltum, stalkum, stiltum, stalkum through your room in the dead o' the night, rattling her keys, and rustling her stiff Italian silk dress? Dear, dear, how awful it must have been. The maids all vow the place is haunted."

"Sweet one!" he said, sadly, as he gazed down in her averted face with a grave smile, "it does my heart good to hear thee prattle, and say thy merry little jesting words; but I have but a few minutes in which to tell thee much."

"But you are not going away so soon?" cried Avice, growing serious on the instant.

"In ten minutes' time," he said. "Look there"—and he led her to a window, and pointed down to where a trooper held by the bit a sturdy horse, which was snorting and pawing impatiently at the stones, rested by a good night amongst straw and ample corn—"in ten minutes I shall be mounted and away. I have but five with you to tell you, dearest love, that I have but one thought in life, and that is thee. Well, sweet one, these are hard times—we may not meet again. Servant has risen against master, subject against King. My place is in the ranks, to fight for my liege. I ask you, then, to give me for breastplate the knowledge that you, my little one, whom I have loved for long, pray nightly for me, and that if I return, I may claim this little hand."

"But, Captain Lawrence," exclaimed Avice, in agitated tones, "I never thought—"

"It is rough wooing, sweet," he said, "but it is a soldier's, and he is called away. Tell me you love me."

"No, no, I cannot—it would be wrong."

"Your aunt will be here in five minutes' time, sweet," he whispered, fondly; "send me happily away."

"I can't, I can't," sobbed the girl, her sweet face drawn with agitation, and the tears streaming down her cheeks.

"Her steps are on the stairs," he whispered; "darling, I love you more than life."

"I can't love you, Captain Lawrence," she sobbed. He gave a groan.

"But I don't love any one else," she said, inarticulately.

That seemed better, and the captain drew her towards him.

"Sweet!" he whispered, with all love's intensity.

"And I never will," cried Avice, as the door was thrown open, and Lady Bankes said—

"Time."

Avice started away, and Captain Lawrence strode with clinking spurs to where he had dropped cloak and hat, threw the former over his arm, and held the latter so that its plume swept the ground.

"Good-bye," exclaimed Lady Bankes, holding out her hand, which the young man kissed; and then she pointed to the door. "For God and King Charles," she said, as he turned for an instant to gaze at both.

"God save the King!" he exclaimed.

And directly after there was the clattering of horse's hoofs heard below, as Avice threw herself, sobbing, into Lady Bankes's arms.

What is Chocolate ?

LINNÆUS was so fond of chocolate that he called it food for the gods in the distinguishing name he gave to the tree that produced it—*Theobroma cacao*.

The tree is a native of tropical America, but is now largely cultivated in other parts of the world. It is an evergreen, and grows to the height of from fourteen to eighteen feet. It bears flowers and fruit at all seasons of the year; these grow out of the trunk and thickest part of the boughs. The little yellow flowers are in clusters, and the fruit, when ripe, is of a beautiful orange colour.

Some idea of its preparation will be given by a short account of a visit to the works of Messrs. Cadbury Brothers, which of late have become widely extended. Fifteen years ago only about thirty hands were employed. The number now is from three to four hundred. The greatest attention is paid in the factory to cleanliness; and in passing through the rooms we noticed that the young women employed were all clad in a kind of uniform of clean brown holland, covering the whole dress.

Prior to 1831, the quantity of cocoa annually consumed in England had not reached half a million

pounds, whereas it now amounts to over nine millions.

The cocoa nuts or beans are carefully sorted, and the unsound ones rejected; they are then placed in rotating cylinders, and subjected to a gentle heat over coke fires, until the full aroma is properly developed. When cooled they are passed to another room, in which machines are arranged for breaking the now crisp, roasted nut, into the irregular segments into which the kernel is naturally divided. The next process is to remove the outer husks by means of a powerful blast. The rich, glossy kernel that remains is known in the market under the name of cocoa nibs.

The visitor is next conducted into a large room, where a long line of stones are working, one over the other, much in the same way as in ordinary flour mills. Between these the nibs are passed, and as the stones are heated the nibs are reduced to a creamy fluid, which flows into pans.

Up to this point we have the cocoa in its native condition, with the exception of the acids, &c., thrown off in roasting, and the shell removed by the fan. We now diverge into three distinct branches of manufacture; and as the cocoa essence is the product of the firm best known to the public, we shall give it precedence.

There is no sophistication in this article: it is the same cocoa we have seen running from the stones in a creamy fluid, with the excess of cocoa butter removed. The best cocoa contains about fifty per cent. of natural cocoa oil or butter, and this has been found to be far too large a proportion for ordinary digestions. Dr. Muter says:—"The only objection which can and does exist to its use in a state of purity is the excessive proportion of fat, which renders it too rich for most digestions, and gives, unfortunately, a colourable excuse for its adulteration."

The removal of two-thirds of the butter is accomplished by means of very powerful and complicated machinery, the result being an impalpable powder, soluble in boiling water, and possessing the nutritious gluten and stimulating theobromine in an increased ratio; so that cocoa essence perhaps stands highest among dietetics as a flesh-former and nutritious beverage.

Still, there is a demand for cocoa that thickens in the cup; and this comprises the second branch of manufacture to be examined. A given portion of the liquid cocoa is poured into a large steam-heated pan, and weighed with the sugar, arrowroot, &c., which of course differ in kind and quantity, according to the value of the chocolate powder required. Strong iron arms are then set in motion, which so completely levigate the mass, that in a few moments it is reduced to a powder. These chocolate powders are sold under the names of homœopathic, Iceland moss, breakfast, &c., &c.

It is a relief, after witnessing these manufacturing processes, to mount into the packing department above, where all is light, cheerful, and orderly. We watch row after row of girls busily engaged. One is weighing, a second is packing and enveloping in cases of bright tinfoil, a third is fastening on the outside labels of the cocoa essence and other preparations now so well known all over the world.

The third branch of manufacture yet to be noticed is that of sweet chocolate for eating and drinking; and here again we have numerous varieties. In the first place, the pure cocoa is incorporated with white sugar, in what is called a "melangeur." This is a round stone basin in which the cocoa and sugar are placed, and which revolves at a great speed, while two heavy stationary rollers bruise the mass until it becomes of about the consistency of dough. From these melangeurs the mixed substance is at once passed through machines with three granite cylinders, which crush it still finer; and in this state it is ready for moulding into the various shapes and sizes for sale.

Other details might be added, and other departments noticed. For example, in the saw mills, in a building opposite, about twenty-five men and boys are employed in the making of wooden boxes exclusively for the firm. Here, too, everything has been done to economize labour by the use of the best kind of saws, planing machines, &c., and this department, with its powerful engine, forms a complete establishment in itself.

A Man Overboard.

PRESENTLY Johnson came in, and enlivened us with his quaint remarks and quainter songs.

Knowing he was working very hard at navigation, I inquired when he thought of "passing the Board" for second mate, and he replied that he hoped to do so whenever the ship returned to England.

"Stow the outer jib!" sang out the mate, rushing by, and Johnson vanished out of the doorway.

Five minutes might have elapsed, when suddenly a shouting was heard on deck. There came such a wild sound, so unlike the customary voice of the mate, or the singing out of a watch on a "down-haul," that M'Ewan, swinging up in his bunk, said—

"S——, what's that?"

But as he was naturally of an excitable nature, I replied—

"Oh, it's all right! perhaps the downhaul has carried away."

But he jumped out of his bunk and went on deck, from whence he speedily returned.

"Come out, man! there's something wrong," he said to me, hurriedly; and in an instant I was on deck.

I shall not easily forget the scene of indescribable confusion which there met my eyes. All hands were running here and there.

It was a man overboard!

"Who is it? who's gone?" everybody asked.

"Johnson," replied the second mate, as he excitedly told me to give him a pull on the fore-bunt-line.

"Poor fellow!" I heard several say.

"Haul up the mainsail!" roared out the mate. "Slack away your sheet! Bear down on the clew-garnets, lads!"

The next order was "Lee fore-brace!" and we hauled the yards forward, to beat as close up to windward as possible.

We were now under the three lower topsails

only. There was a man at each masthead looking out; and the rest of the hands on deck gathered on the weather side of the forecastle-head, vainly stretching their eyes each time we rose.

What breathless excitement marked every face! eagerness to rescue a fellow-being from death—impotency to act.

The captain walked hurriedly up and down the weather side of the poop, anxiously looking through his glass at intervals.

"Poor Johnson!" "Who would have thought it, now?" "Well, there's a chance yet," were the ejaculations heard from his shipmates.

The wind blew bleak and strong, and the huge waves grew blacker and blacker as the evening gave way to night. Half a dozen men wanted to lower the quarter-boat to go in search of him; but the captain wisely forbade it, as his whereabouts was now not known, and they themselves would be in great danger in such a heavy sea.

The helmsman threw him a lifebuoy as he floated past the stern, which being painted white was more distinguishable than a man; whether he laid hold of it or not was never known. The unfortunate man was never again seen.

On account of the danger in bringing the ship to the wind in that heavy sea, she was wore round, and in the large circle made the masthead-men lost sight of the unhappy sailor; indeed, I believe we were three or four miles to leeward by the time we came up on the other tack.

"We shall see no more of Johnson," said Turner to me, which I thought too true to need a reply.

After beating up for half an hour, the captain came to the break of the poop, and himself gave the order to set sail and stand on our course again.

This sealed poor Johnson's fate.—*Two Years Aboard the Mast.*

The Egotist's Note-book.

HERE are a few new cuttings from the "Agony Column":—

"C. T.—Why don't you write to your deeply-troubled old father, getting to the last of this month? Let all animosity be forgotten betwixt him and you, at least."

Well, why don't you write, C. T.? Your father tells you as plainly as possible that he won't keep you out of the property much longer.

"Lion.—Positively told the J— himself, long ago, if he had not been paid to send bill, and I would pay him. Twenty years ago! No more responsible than a child. P—n and L—s have done it all, no doubt."

Of course they have; but what is it they have done? How much was the bill?

"E. W. to F—d.—Should like to see you as soon as convenient. Say D. or S. Business dull. If cannot come, please send. F—ds low. Same address quite safe."

Ah, "E. W." Fred won't be in a hurry to come if f—ds are low.

"ALERT AND DISCOVERY.—My precious Charlie, your dear letter, received the 9th, made me so happy, but had none since. Afraid you're ill again, dearest; pray write immediately. Wish I was with you, to take care of you, my dear one. Undying love: ever yours."

How beautiful! And yet that "precious Charlie" never sent even a valentine to his devoted "Alert and Discovery."

The attention of the House of Commons is to be drawn to the obstructive policy of Messrs. Biggar and Parnell. The member for Cavan says he isn't in the least afraid. "Whalley," he observes, "used to be considered the biggest nuisance in the House, but I'm a Biggar."

A correspondent of the "leading journal" says that quite a brisk trade is being carried on in the importation of foreign bronze coins. An English sovereign can be exchanged for 240 pennies, but it will purchase 253 French or Belgian ten-cent pieces, and that rate of profit has induced a number of speculators to cultivate the business. Luckily for the Mint authorities, this "new industry" must be limited in the extent of its operations, and there will be no necessity for alarm until the French are willing, owing to the scarcity of bronze coins, to give 253 sovereigns for a ten-cent piece.

Here is a question:—

Was Mr. Charles Reade's ship "Scuttled" because it was in the coal trade?

If the *Hornet* and its new contemporary, *London*, keep throwing so much mud at the proprietor of *Truth*, whether it sticks or no it will make *La boue chère*. But mud always was plentiful in London.

Mr. James Albery's comedy, announced as "Gentle Rebecca," has appeared as "The Pink Dominoes." It is to be presumed that these are sisters—one named Rebecca, otherwise the Gentle, and the other the well-known historical young lady, Anno Domino of that ilk.

Somebody must be very busy compiling pedigrees for hungry claimants. A few weeks ago a clergyman announced his intention to assume the baronetcy of Swale, created by Charles II., and which has been long extinct. Last week a claimant appeared for the dormant earldom of Oxford; and now a Welsh gentleman intimates that he has discovered that he is lineally descended from Humphrey de Bohun, the famous Duke of Gloucester, and that he intends not only to assume the name, but also to assert his rights and privileges. In point of fact, self-assertion seems to be the order of the day, and it would not be surprising to find the country called upon to recognize an entirely new peerage.

"I was crossing a long railroad bridge," said a Yankee yarn-spinner to some acquaintances, "when I was surprised to see a locomotive coming round a curve, and tearing towards me at a terrific speed. The bridge was too narrow to allow of escape in

either side, and I did not dare to jump into the yawning abyss below. In a flash I took in the situation. I started on a quick run towards the locomotive, and when within a few feet of it I concentrated all my nerve and muscle into one effort, and leaped straight up into the air. The fearful monster shot under me, and I came down on the bridge, saved from death, but seriously shaken by the descent."

There was a moment or two of deep silence; and then one of the company sighed, and said, in a whisper loud enough to be heard a quarter of a mile off—

"What's the use of presence of mind when a man can lie like that?"

A movement is on foot to provide Sir Rowland Hill with a memorial for his efforts in getting for us the penny postage. It has been one of the greatest conveniences of modern civilization; but, oh, the money it has caused me to spend in stamps!

Mr. Lawrence Hamilton offers a hundred guineas to the fund, and is also giving his time and energy to procure an improvement in the state of our hospital wards. His idea is to decorate the dreary, whitewashed walls with art objects, pleasing to the eyes of the suffering patients. I am with him, and wish all success to his endeavours, if he will add those most gladsome and charming of all objects—flowers.

Strange things are sometimes done by mistake, but this is singularly awkward:—

"The gentleman who received, by mistake, on Thursday, the 22nd instant, a parcel, containing a picture, intended for another gentleman of the same name, is earnestly requested to send the same to the lady whose name and address are written in full on a card fastened to the parcel."

He isn't a gentleman if he hasn't returned the parcel by this time. Still, it isn't pleasant to receive the portrait of a fair unknown, and then, having shown it to your friends, to have to give it up again.

"An honourable family at Brussels desires to welcome one or two young girls for improving in the French language."

Brussels is a charming little city, and the inhabitants speak fairly good French. But what is the price of the welcome offered by this "honourable family" to the parents of the innocent young misses advertised for? If the members of the honourable family are related to the blood royal, the figure may be pretty high; but, as the Belgian nobility is of a rather gingerbread character, there isn't much to be gained by making use of it in "touting" for customers.

The following dialogue took place in a magistrate's private room:—

Magistrate: "Do you think the man is really mad, and ought I to detain him?"

Doctor: "You shall judge for yourself. I had scarcely entered his chamber, when he broke off one of the bedposts, and threatened to murder me."

Magistrate, evidently moved, to officer of the court: "Let the prisoner be released instantly."

Two artists were talking of the forthcoming Academy Exhibition—

"I shall simply send that Venus there," remarked one.

"What's the use?" asked the other. "There's no chance for high art now. You must have sentiment—something that appeals to the feelings."

"Have you found a subject?"

"Yes. A poor little stray duck wandering in a turnip-field."

At a card table:—

"Last year I had no luck at all; but last week I lost both my mother-in-law and my wife!"

Jones, who is a bit of a wag, recently took some fresh apartments. They were on the second floor. The landlord lived on the first floor, and entreated Jones, when he came in at night, to make as little noise as possible.

"I was obliged," said he, "to part with your predecessor because he always awoke me when he went upstairs at night."

Jones went home at about eleven, and mounted the stairs on tiptoe. As soon as he had reached his own apartment, he descended to the door of his landlord's room, and knocked loudly.

No reply.

He knocked again more vigorously than before, with the same result. The third time he knocked loudly enough to arouse the whole house.

"What the deuce is the matter?" cried the landlord, who at length made his appearance.

Jones, most politely: "I just wanted to know whether I awoke you in going upstairs!"

MESSRS. Herbert & Son, of York-place, Baker-street, have invented a belt that must prove invaluable to married ladies recovering at delicate periods of their life. At such times, unless proper restraint is applied, the figure is liable to lose its accustomed grace and become heavy, and to meet this difficulty Messrs. Herbert's belt is applicable. It is light, easily applied, in nowise cumbrous, and possesses the unusual advantage that it can be worn with the ordinary corset of daily life.

THE morality of the business world may be considered at a very low ebb, when almost directly a new article has been introduced, and is by universal consent considered a success, worthless imitations of it appear. These imitators trade upon the reputation gained by the original invention, and if not narrowly watched bring it into bad repute. Imitations are in existence of the "New Patent Stocking Suspender," the only safeguard being the name of Almond stamped on every clasp and on the band. Every lady desiring health and comfort should provide herself with a pair of these useful articles, which may be obtained of Mr. H. J. Almond, 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, E.C. Ladies' size, post free, 3s. 2d. per pair. Size of waist required.

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER XXIV.—RUTH'S SHOT.

THE place was filled with smoke directly; for weapons were used indiscriminately, the landlord bringing out a couple, and using them bravely, with the result that at the end of a minute the bar was again cleared, but not without one of the miners falling dangerously injured, and one of the desperadoes being shot through the head with a bullet from Si Slocum's pistol.

Jerry Blackburn had fought like a fury, and played no small part in clearing the place; while several of the inhabitants of the gulch, who were on the side of law and order, came to the help of those in the bar, driving the ruffians out of the place, but not until they had left their marks on several of their enemies.

Just as the ruffians were getting thoroughly worsted, a swarthy, Mexican-looking fellow, gaily dressed, leaped into their midst, followed by four more, and carried his little party off to the security of the rocks, where it was not deemed safe to follow.

"That was Vasquez himself," said a miner, who had been fighting very bravely beside Si Slocum.

"Vasquez?" said Si, starting—"what Vasquez?"

"Why, our Vasquez, the head of the gang that hangs about here. Didn't you see him?"

"No," was the reply; and Si stood thinking. "What was this Vasquez before he came here?" he asked.

"Gaol bird, stage robber, rowdy Mexican—everything that's bad!"

"Was he in New York three or four years ago?" said Si.

"Yes, in prison," said the miner, "so I've heard; and he has taken it out of everybody he has met ever since. He's got a cave up yonder in the mountain."

A strange feeling of discomfort came over Si Slocum as he realized the fact for the first time that he was so near his old enemy.

"Here, Jerry," he cried.

And the black hurried to him, still rubbing his neck.

"Stop for nothing," said Si; "but follow me."

Saying this, the trapper hurried to where he had left his mustang, and leaped on its back; Jerry twisted his hand in the animal's long tail, and they soon left the gulch far behind.

"I shall be bringing the bloodthirsty wretch down on my peaceful little home," said Si to himself, as he cantered on.

Then, pulling up, he made Jerry mount, and, following that worthy's example, he too twisted his hand in the mustang's tail, and ran after it for a couple of miles, before a fresh change of place followed.

By this plan they got rapidly over the open ground, till the mountains were reached, where it became a matter of foot-pace, and Si alighted, to walk beside Jerry, who seemed not in the slightest degree the worse for his adventure.

"There, Jerry," said Si, "I expect yew won't want to go to Randan Gulch any more."

"Not want ter go no more, sah?" cried Jerry. "Speck, sah, I nebber happy no more till I see dat Coyote Tobe hung up for de crow to pick. What niggah do to him, dat he serb him so? Yes, sah, must go to gulch 'gain ebersonmany times. I goin' learn up play on de ole big gun at the ranch, and I practice de toon I make Mass' Coyote Tobe dance to some day or other."

"What, will you shoot him, Jerry?" said Si, smiling.

"Dat's so, Mass' Si. I play de toon pop bang on de ole big gun; and when I do, I sorry for Mass' Coyote Tobe; so he better not come anigh me, dat's all."

Jerry was as good as his word, for Si let him have the "ole big gun" as he called it. It was a tremendously long rifle, with a heavy barrel and clumsy stock; but one which Jerry shouldered with delight, when his master furnished him with powder and ball, and little Freddie took his own tiny rifle, and went off with the black into the woods.

For, tired as he was, Jerry was not too weary to begin playing upon the great weapon, which was soon after heard roaring in the evening gloom.

"Why, Si, what is the matter?" cried Ruth, as she laid her hand upon her husband's arm, while the mustang made its own way to its cosy stable.

"Nothing much, Rewth," said Si, speaking in a strange voice, as Patsey hurriedly placed his evening meal upon the little table outside the door—"nothing much, my gal, only I've been in a scrimmage."

"Not hurt?" cried Ruth, in alarm.

"Not touched, my gal," he replied; "but come, even if I was, yew mustn't look like that. S'pose I'd got a plug in me, yew'd have to pull it out, my gal, and bind up the place."

"Yes, yes, of course," she said, resuming her firmness. "But yew really aint hurt, Si?"

"Not touched, my gal," he replied, "only in spirit. Rewth, my gal, yew used to handle a rifle well."

"Yes, Si, I used to shoot," she said, smiling.

"Go and get your piece, and load it," he said.

Ruth looked at him wonderingly, and then fetched a rather small-sized rifle, with its powder horn and bullet pouch, which she laid upon the table.

Then with deft fingers she loaded and capped the piece, turning to her husband afterwards with a smile.

Si stood thinking for a few moments, then taking one of the apples that lay upon the table, he bit a piece out of it, leaving a white patch on the side.

"Rewth, my gal," he said, "I don't know how soon trouble may come upon us, and mayhap you will be called upon to defend our little home here in the wilderness. Let's see, then, if yew have lost yew're old cunning with the piece."

"What shall I fire at?" said Ruth, gazing earnestly in her husband's troubled countenance.

"At this apple, girl," said Si. "At how many paces could you hit it?"

"Forty or fifty," said Ruth, with quiet confidence in her tone.

"To be sure," he said, smiling, as he led her away from the cottage. "Stand there, then, Rewth, my gal."

He placed her in an open spot, as just then there came the roar of Jerry's "big ole gun," followed by the sharp crack of Freddie's miniature rifle.

"Warlike times!" said Si, smiling. "There, be steady, my gal."

"Where are you going to place the apple?" said Ruth, trembling.

"I'm going to walk forty paces, Rewth," said Si, quietly; "and then I'm going to hold up the apple in my hand. Think that your deadliest enemy is before you; that this white patch in the apple is the white of his eye, and that upon your aim depend the life of your child, your own honour, and perhaps my life as well; and then fire."

"Si!" cried his wife, imploringly.

"Rewth—wife!" he said, quietly.

And she drew a long breath between her teeth, as he coolly began to pace out the distance, for she never disobeyed his direct orders; and she knew he was not a man, with all his tender love for her, to disobey.

Her hands trembled, and a deadly pallor overspread her countenance; but by an effort she resumed command over her feelings, and, as Si reached the end of the forty-pace distance, she was standing calm and cool, with her hands grasping the rifle, dropped to the full extent of her arms, her right thumb cocking the piece, whose "click-click" sounded wonderfully loud.

But motionless as she stood, her heart was beating heavily, and thought after thought ran swiftly through her brain. If she should strike him, her husband, and maim him for life — perhaps kill him!

It was too horrible to think of; and yet if she swerved in the slightest degree, it would give such divergence to the bullet that it might find a home in his heart.

"I must be firm," she muttered — "firm as a rock, for he wishes me to fire."

"Now, my gal," said Si, calmly, as he placed the apple in the fingers of his left hand, to hold it at arm's length, "recollect what I said. The white spot in the apple, mind."

He must have had wonderful confidence in her skill, as he stood there facing her; while she seemed to become rigid as steel as she raised the rifle to her shoulder, and took a long and careful aim.

At least, it seemed a long time to Patsey Collins, as she stood breathlessly watching the two statuesque figures till there was a puff of white smoke, a sharp report, and the apple that Si had held aloft seemed to fly to pieces; while he directly afterwards quietly walked up to Ruth, patted her on the shoulder, and said —

"Good girl—good girl! Yew could do more than that, if you tried. Yew must keep up yewre practice, my gal, and I don't know that we sha'n't have to give a few lessons to little Patsey here."

As for Ruth, she quietly reloaded the piece, trying hard to subdue the fluttering of her heart the while, and then followed her husband as he went in search of Freddie and the black.

CHAPTER XXV.—OLD ENEMIES.

THERE was a good deal of talk at Randan Gulch about forming a vigilance committee, and taking steps to put down Vasquez's band; but nothing was done, though the place was fast growing into a town of some size and importance. For the gold discoveries higher up in the mountains to the north kept increasing in extent, and people flocked in with stores and building materials. A plot was staked out to-day; to-morrow a boarded hut was up, with a signboard, probably, on the front, telling that the owner was a storekeeper or an auctioneer.

In fact, there were rumours of the starting of a newspaper, while necessities were fast being succeeded by the luxuries and superfluities of life.

Fortunately for Si Slocum's peace of mind, the taking up of claims had all been to the northward, every attempt to find gold south of the gulch resulting in absolute failure.

Every day, though, the party in favour of law and order grew more strong; and it was evident that the days of such a party of desperadoes as the band of Vasquez must be numbered.

Several of the parties who had come in of late to settle knew of the doings of the band in the neighbourhood of Sonora, and told how two thousand dollars were offered for the capture of the leader, dead or alive.

In fact, the country north had grown too hot for the party, and hence their installation in the vicinity of the new settlement, where law and order were at present in embryo.

The band probably owed their immunity from capture to their daring, though the nature of the country was greatly in their favour; for once out of the settlement, and in amongst the mountains, a wilderness was before them, with whose mazes they had made themselves well acquainted, and any attempt to follow them resulted in the adventurous pursuers being shot down by invisible enemies, lurking behind stones or in crevices of the rocks.

Rumour, truthfully or not, said that the desperadoes had a cavern far up in the mountains, whose entrance was a profound secret, known only to themselves, and any attempt to discover it meant death to the adventurous searcher.

This cave was said to be well-provisioned with the barrels of flour and other stores taken from the various emigrant trains they had attacked. There was said to be quite a magazine of blasting powder seized by them — Government property this, intended for the miners. Of the amount of gold plundered from these latter, the store collected was said to be immense. And up in this stronghold, amongst their treasures, the band of Vasquez were said to pass their time in drinking and gambling, save when they felt disposed to make a raid upon the gulch, or to waylay some unfortunate party of expeditionists on their way across the plains.

As to the direction in which the cavern lay, no one knew anything; and the party that followed the half-breed Spaniard were too staunch to breathe a word to a soul.

There was considerable discontent exhibited ther,

by several of the leading miners and traders, when it was found that Si Slocum, who had won their respect by his frank daring, was not to be found.

His friend, the storekeeper, however, spoke up, undertaking to bring Si back to the settlement, and get his co-operation.

"Where does he live?" said one of the miners.

And on being told—

"Why, that must be the ranch which forms part of the land Government's going to have sold here by auction in a week or two."

"If it is," said the storekeeper, "there'll be a row; for Si Slocum is not the man to part easily with the bit of land he has taken up, and made his home for years. It's precious hard, and the Government agents don't do their duty in seeing to the state of the land before they make these sales."

When the party broke up, the storekeeper sought out a trusty messenger, and the next morning sent him off with a note to Si, telling him what was the common talk of the place, and warning him that he ought to be up at the gulch, to take steps either to dispute the right of sale, or to be ready to buy the land; at the same time hinting that he need not stand still for money, as both the writer and the landlord of the bar would be ready to help him with advances.

That same day a train of mule and bullock carts arrived, with a party of fresh settlers and traders, who had been attracted to the gulch; and amongst them were a well-built, gentlemanly-looking young fellow, who gave himself out to be a surveyor, and an elderly gentleman with his daughter, and an Irish man-servant, who were the surveyor's friends.

They came in contact with the storekeeper, who found that the young surveyor meant to purchase land somewhere in the neighbourhood, and he found the party accommodation until such time as they were better able to provide for themselves.

In the evening, Si Slocum came over, in a towering rage; but he did not encounter the new arrivals, his time being taken up in seeking out the auctioneer and the Government agent, but without success.

"Tell yew what it is, boss," the landlord said, when Si sought him, in company with the storekeeper, for advice—"tell yew what it is, I don't think I should go on fighting this here matter. Yew've got the land, and now it happens that Gov'ment says it means to sell it. Well, let it."

"What, the ranch I have made into a beautiful little home?"

"To be sure," said the landlord; "but then nobody knows that, and nobody wants it. The ranch will be put up for sale—nobody knows where it is, or cares for it, so nobody will bid. Yew step in, and offer a few dollars for it, and it is knocked down to yew. There yew air, then—bought of the Gov'ment; and as soon as yew get your papers nobody can touch yew for evermore. That's the best advice I can give."

"I believe you are right," said Si, who was standing with his foot resting on the head of Jack, the dog having followed him unseen from the ranch, and now lying crouching at his feet.

"Same time, I reckon," said the storekeeper, "that

Si Slocum here, holding the ranch as he does, has a right to dispute the sale."

"Dare say he has," said the landlord; "only what I say is, that for two or three hundred dollars he can get the thing comfably fixed, while it will cost him more to get it fixed uncomfably."

"There, you must do what you think best," said the storekeeper; "only you must not let the ranch go. How's that nigger of yours? Him as had his neck stretched."

"Quite well again now," said Si; "but it was a narrow escape for him, I guess, poor fellow! You ought to clear out that band of scoundrels."

"Yes, so we ought," said the landlord; "and if a man like yew, sirree, was to call on our cha-aps to come and help yew, the thing would be done."

Si stood thinking for a minute, and then shook his head.

"I'm not the style of man, sir," he said. "I can fight a little, but it wants a fellow with brains and management to act as leader."

"I shouldn't like to go and fight under a man as had got more brains and management than yew have, Si Slocum," said the storekeeper. "Anyhow, yew think it over; and meantime landlord here and I will keep our eyes open about the sale of the ranch, and send you word of all we see and hear."

Si's reluctance to join in any attack upon the Vasquez party was swept away on the instant; for a dozen men hurried into the bar.

"What's up?" said the storekeeper and landlord in a breath.

"One of Vasquez's spies saw Slocum here come into the gulch, and he gave warning to his lot. They're coming on, vowing vengeance against him for shooting two of their men."

Si's hand went to his belt on the instant, where his revolver and knife were in readiness, and as the two men with whom he had been conversing saw his look, they exchanged glances. For here was their leader ready to hand, and the opportunity had come for exterminating the band of desperadoes that was the terror of the settlement.

"Here, lads, two of you," cried the storekeeper, "slip out and collect all you can. We must have them this time; for we can't let our friend here, who has fought for us, be took."

"No, no," was chorused.

And two men hurried out, but only to return directly with bad news.

"Come out," they cried, in a hurried whisper; "there's no time to collect more—the shooting will do it. Vasquez's lads, with Bledsoe and Vasquez himself, are coming on."

The little party, headed by Si Slocum, rushed out, and being inferior in numbers, began to retreat, but only to find that they were between two fires.

After a few shots had been exchanged there was a parley.

"Look here," said the leader, stepping forward, "we don't want to hurt any of you; we can talk to you another time. That's the fellow we want. Give him up, and— What!" he roared, with a look of savage joy illuminating his evil countenance, "Si Slocum?"

"Yes, Si Slocum," said the trapper, "at your service, Mr. Vasquez, forger and thief."

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Mr. Si Slocum," said Vasquez, who turned of a livid yellow with rage. "I knew that there was a bullying ruffian wanted by my party of hard-working miners for wounding two of them, but I did not know it was the amiable, honest Mr. Si Slocum, my New York friend, with whom I have a long score to settle. Here, stand back all of you," he cried, fiercely; "this man is my prisoner."

"Who'll stand by me?" cried Si, taking a step backward.

"All of us!" cried those who had come with him from the bar.

"You fools!" roared Vasquez; "take that for your pains."

And discharging his revolver twice at them, he made a dash at Si, who avoided his grasp, and a fierce fight ensued, the two principals being separated by the rush of Vasquez's band.

So fierce and savage was the fight, that the more peaceable party were fast getting the worst of it, in spite of the almost superhuman efforts of Si Slocum. A few more men had joined the fray, and several poor wretches had gone down, weakening by their fall both of the contending sides.

The men fought principally with their knives, for at these close quarters pistols could not be fired without the risk of injuring friends as well as foes. It was due to this that the contest was less fatal than it otherwise would have been; but Vasquez's party were momentarily growing too much for the others, the dread and desperate nature of the men keeping those away who, under other circumstances, might have helped to turn the balance.

Si called to his party to stand firm, and boldly threw himself forward to save several endangered followers; but it was all in vain. He felt that he was growing exhausted, that his companions were giving way; and, unwilling as he had been to mix himself up in this fray, he had, in spite of his good resolutions, been dragged into it, and the probabilities were that he would be captured by Vasquez, carried off, and as to his future fate—

The poor fellow shuddered as he recalled his peaceful home amongst the mountains, and pictured Ruth waiting for him, never to come again.

These thoughts passed like a flash through Si Slocum's brain in the midst of that desperate struggle, and seemed to reanimate him, as, striking right and left, men went down, and he cheered his companions on.

Just then he came face to face with Vasquez; and, watching their opportunity, the two men closed, each striving to bury his knife in the other's breast.

The effort was futile; for, versed in such matters, each caught the other's wrist as it descended, and the struggle now was reduced to one of power to sustain the effort.

Upon the two leaders closing, the other combatants drew apart by mutual consent, and those who lay bleeding and groaning on the ground were unheeded in the interest of the struggle.

For the party of Vasquez knew that with the downfall of their leader would come the probable

breaking up of their gang; while the others were eager to see his fall for the same reason.

The men were well matched—Vasquez, from his life of hardship, being as sinewy as a panther, while Si was a pattern of manly strength.

As they stood glaring one at the other, the lookers-on stood hardly daring to draw breath; and every feint at attack by Vasquez, so as to gain some advantage, was received with a murmur of admiration from his party, a sigh of dismay from the others; till it became evident that Si Slocum's healthy strength was prevailing, when a cheer rose up, for Vasquez was being forced back; and the fight was about to be renewed, when Jake Bledsoe, with a snarl like that of some wild beast, took poor Si at a disadvantage, by rushing forward, leaping on his back, and raising his knife to plunge it in his breast.

The London 'Bus Conductor.

THERE is among the labouring classes a large body of men with whom every passenger in London streets comes in contact, and who are seldom known to resort to casual pauperism, or even to out-door parochial relief, in order to supplement the miserable pittance which they receive for almost unremitting toil. The drivers of vans and waggons, who are out from early morning till late at night in all weather, and the lads who go with them as "minders," must be regarded as amongst the hardest-worked and most poorly-remunerated of London labourers; and the case of the omnibus conductors is even worse, when we consider the temptations to which they are exposed by the opportunities for appropriating a part of the money received during the day.

"I shan't go off, sir, not till twenty minutes past twelve to-night," said a conductor to me only a few days ago.

"Past twelve it is before we get our last journey done, and then there's to go to the stables and see everything all put up right for the night, and that makes it better than one o'clock before I get home and go to bed. To-morrow I've got to be at work by half-past eight; and I don't get a Sunday off, not even once a fortnight, though we're supposed to, because there's always some man being discharged, or else alterations made, and one of us has to take his place. I put it to you, sir, what a man can lay by out of four shillin's a day, especially when for the least thing—perhaps a horse down on the asphalt—as makes the 'bus late on a journey, or for being overtired and settin' down on the step for a minute just as the 'bus is near the station, and when there's nobody likely to be hailed, he's punished by being put off work for two days out o' the week.

"Watched! Why, bless your 'art, sir, there's no telling when the old man mayn't be down on you, or where he won't ketch you. He might be ready in his gig at the corner of the next street to spot you in a minute; and them two outside passengers that's just got up might as like as not be two police in private clothes which is employed by the company. What is there left, sir, for a man's wife and children, if he's got any, when, even saying he has breakfast

at home at seven, there's a bit of something needed at eleven, and he must get his dinner, for no man can be up and down behind a 'bus all day, in all sorts o' weather, and starve himself; and what with the wear and tear o' clothes, it isn't much that can be put by, not if we work all our time, and don't get fined or pulled up, and so lose a day or two, or have to give evidence, even when we're not in fault, and get punished by losing half a week's wages; and yet people wonder, sir, that some among us gives a rough word, when perhaps there's somebody inside as don't know where they want to go, and won't ask, and keeps us, maybe, three or four minutes, with a policeman threatenin' to summon us, and the old man coming along ready to report us."

The driver is perhaps a little better off. He has, at any rate, six shillings a week more than the conductor; but he, too, is liable to find himself suddenly amidst the unemployed. However, he is comparatively free from the constant temptation to dishonesty, which is one of the most dangerous besetments of the conductor. It is of no use to deny the fact that, though there is a superficial system of checks, and a very debasing system of espionage, the low rate of wages paid to omnibus conductors is excused on the ground that they have such facilities for keeping some part of the day's takings. Thus, at the same time, undetected dishonesty is provided against, and actually discovered peculation is punished. Surely it requires a robust moral character to resist opportunities for taking a per centage which is already reckoned by deduction from wages! It needs only a little sophistry for a needy man, who is paid less wages than a bricklayer's labourer for double the work, on the ground that he is sure to make something extra by robbing his employers, to argue that as his employer begins by robbing him, and so puts him altogether on the outside of moral considerations, and into what may be called a state of war, he is justified in verifying his position.

Heaven forbid that I should loosen the obligations of strictest integrity between employer and employed; but such an acknowledged reason as that which operates in keeping the omnibus conductor amongst the under-paid is an awfully potent cause of enlarging the dangerous classes, for it makes weak men criminal, and even strong men desperate, because of the continual difficulty imposed on them to remain honest, when they are called upon to earn their living on terms applicable alone to dishonesty. Just imagine sixteen hours a day outside an omnibus in the open air, with hunger keen and strong, and an absolute necessity for keeping up vital warmth and energy by four or five meals a day, two of which must consist chiefly of animal food; and calculate how far will four shillings go? We must remember that these men cannot, as a rule, go home to any meal during the working day, and that their food therefore costs them dearly. It must usually be taken at some tavern or coffee-shop, and, leaving out the question of stimulants, must be accompanied with drink of some kind. How far will forty-eight pence go? and how much will remain for the conductor to keep a home with, and pay for stout clothes, hats, and boots, with probably a certain fee for duties done for him by stable-helpers?

There is no organization among drivers and conductors, in the shape of a large benefit society or club for mutual help in case of sickness, or of being suddenly, and perhaps unjustly, thrown out of work—no association on which a poor woman or her children can rely in time of trouble, except a fund managed by the company, which is not by any means regarded favourably by some of the men, who brood on the recollection of having been suspended for a day or two without due inquiry, and reflect painfully on the fact that a part of the forty-eight pence—which is, after all, precarious, little as it is—has to be contributed towards an uncertain benefit which they have no personal share in distributing or in securing. It must not be forgotten, either, that the drivers and conductors of omnibuses occupy a prominent position; they are constantly under the public eye. Their conduct is as closely scrutinized as that of policemen themselves, and yet they have no authority. What would be but a choleric word from most persons who have difficult duties to perform, and are liable to so much irritating interference, is in them flat blasphemy, rendering them liable to all kinds of pains and penalties, including poverty and hunger. Then, again, they must make a decent appearance; must patiently submit to be stirred up and prodded into attention by the ferules of umbrellas and the hooks of walking-sticks. They must be ready to give change; to look for lost fourpenny-pieces; to distinguish in the dark, and with numbed fingers, the difference between fourpenny and threepenny bits; to be answerable for the miserable economy of their employers in sending out unventilated, and yet leaky roofed, vehicles, to enter or to leave which is alike perilous, because of defective steps, and the want of proper hand-holds whereby to clutch.

Let us think of the general good-humour, alertness, neatness, and patient endurance of this large army of our public servants, and ask ourselves what might be their condition if they yielded to all the influences which may so easily affect a man who does such work as theirs, with the perpetual and painful sense that he is miserably under-paid, and we shall aid in any effort that may be made to remove at least one set of men from the liability to pass from the merely under-paid and over-worked to the actually dangerous classes.

NO TIME FOR SWAPPING.—An Indiana man was travelling down the Ohio on a steamer with a mare and two-year-old colt, when by a sudden career of the boat all three were tilted into the water. The Hoosier, as he rose, puffing and blowing, above water, caught hold of the tail of the colt, not having a doubt that the natural instinct of the animal would carry him safe ashore. The old mare made for the shore, but the frightened colt swam lustily down the current, with its owner still hanging fast. "Let go of the colt and hang on to the mare!" shouted some of his friends. "Booh!" exclaimed the Hoosier, spouting the water from his mouth, and shaking his head like a Newfoundland dog, "it's mighty fine, telling me to let go the colt; but to a man that can't swim, this aint exactly the time for swapping horses."

Monnier and the Dandy.

THE following is one of the many amusing stories told of Henri Monnier, the gifted author, painter, and actor, whose death was recorded at Paris a few days ago. He was riding in an omnibus one day with D—, a friend, who occasionally helped at his theatre, when there got into the omnibus a foppishly dressed young man, whose fingers were covered with glittering rings.

The moment Monnier and his friend saw him, they exchanged significant glances. The dandy seated himself straight opposite D—, who immediately began to play his part of a well-conceived trick. He fixed his eyes so as to give them the vacant stare of an idiot; his nether lip was drawn down, and he frothed a little at the mouth; in short, he seemed to have suddenly gone mad.

The scene commenced.

D—, glaring at the hands of the dandy: "I want a ring! I want a ring!"

Monnier, to the stranger: "Hide your hands, sir—they excite him; but don't give him a ring, I entreat you."

The dandy: "Certainly not! I shall not give him one. He is too audacious."

D—, energetically: "I want a ring! Me—I want a ring!"

Monnier: "For heaven's sake, sir, hide your hands. You'll make him furious."

The dandy, putting his hands behind his back: "This is abominable. They ought not to allow a madman to get into an omnibus."

D—, furiously: "I want a ring!" (Then, getting up from his seat): "My ring! I want—"

Monnier: "Good heavens, sir, give him a ring, or we shall all be murdered. You see, I can't control him."

The dandy, amazed and wild with fear, sprang to the door, shouting, "Conductor! conductor!—stop! stop!" And, leaping out, he rushed up the street as fast as his legs could carry him, leaving Monnier and his friend in the omnibus half dead with laughter at his fright.

Anecdotes of Dress and Fashion.

THE following particulars are selected from a work of considerable interest, and they show that much ingenuity and expense were lavished upon dress at the commencement of the last century.

The author we quote is Malcolm, in his "Anecdotes of Manners and Customs of London during the eighteenth century." He says:

"It may be inferred from the ensuing story that wigs of delicate and beautiful hair, whether for the use of ladies or gentlemen, were in great demand, or highly valued by some of our beaux or belles. An Oxfordshire lass was lately courted by a young man of that county, who was not willing to marry her unless her friends could advance fifty pounds for her portion, which they being incapable of doing, the lass came to this city to try her fortune, where she met with a good chapman in the Strand, who made a purchase of her hair (which was delicately long and light), and gave her sixty pounds for it,

being twenty ounces at three pounds an ounce; with which money she joyfully returned into the country and bought her a husband." (*Protestant Mercury*, July 10th, 1700.)

Admitting this to be a mere fabrication to fill the paper, it is by no means to be doubted that good hair sold at three pounds per ounce.

Muffs, according to our author, were in use before the year 1700, but very different in shape and materials from those of his day (1808). What would a fashionable belle say to a furrier who should offer her one for sale made of the leopard's skin? Yet such were worn in 1702. In the same year it was customary to adorn the arm with lockets, as they were then called.

A large one is thus described in an advertisement as lost by a lady:—

"Striped with dark brown and fair hair, wrought like camlet, the hair set in gold; over the hair a cypher of four letters, R.A.M.L., under a cut crystal, and set round with rose diamonds." Diamond stomachers adorned the ladies' busts, and were composed in that valuable stone, set in silver, and sewed in a variety of figures upon black silk; and they must be admitted to have been a brilliant, if not an elegant, ornament.

Pressing Grapes for Sherry.

THE pressing commenced between seven and eight p.m., and was accomplished in a detached building, under a low-tiled roof, but entirely open in front.

Passing through the gateway, and stumbling in the dim light afforded by an occasional lamp fixed against the wall, over a rudely paved courtyard, we found ourselves beside a row of large, stout wooden troughs, some ten feet square and a couple of feet deep, raised about three feet from the ground, and known in the vernacular of the vineyards as lagares. The bottoms of these receptacles were already strewn with grapes, lightly sprinkled over with yeso (gypsum), which, if spread over the whole of the bunches, would not have been greatly in excess of the amount of dust ordinarily gathered by a similar quantity of grapes conveyed in open baskets on the backs of mules from the vineyards to the pressing-places in the towns.

Rising perpendicularly in the centre of each of the four lagares to a height of about seven feet is a tolerably powerful screw, which is only brought into requisition after the grapes have been thoroughly trodden.

A couple of swarthy, bare-legged pisadores leap into each lagar, and commence spreading out the bunches with wooden shovels; and soon the whole eight of them, in their short drawers, blue-striped shirts, little caps, red sashes, and hob-nailed shoes, are dancing a more or less lively measure, ankle deep in newly crushed grapes.

They dance in couples, one on each side of the screw, performing certain rapid, pendulum-like movements, which are supposed to have the virtue of expressing the juice more satisfactorily from the fruit than can be accomplished by mere mechanical

means. Their saltatory evolutions ended, the trodden grapes are heaped up on one side, and well patted about with the shovel, like so much newly mixed mortar. This causes the expressed juice to flow out in a dingy, brown, turgid stream, through the spout fixed in front of the lagar, into a metal strainer, and thence into the vat placed beneath to receive it.

Fresh grapes are now spread over the bottom of the lagar, and, after being duly danced upon, are shovelled on one side; and this kind of thing goes on until sufficient trodden murk has been accumulated to make what is called the pile.

The pisadores now retire in favour of the tiradores, or pressers, who, springing into the lagares, collect all the trodden grapes together, and skilfully build them, by the aid of wooden shovels and that readier implement the hand, in a compact mass around the screw, just as an expert plasterer would build up a circular column of compo. The form taken by this in the first instance, owing to the weight of the murk, is necessarily conical, consequently the base has to be neatly trimmed, and the detached fragments built round the upper part of the column, until this attains a height of some five feet.

When perfected, it is bound round with a long band of esparto, about four inches wide, from base to summit, and a flat wooden slab being placed on the top, with the nut of the screw immediately above it, the handles of the screw are rapidly turned, causing the juice to exude between the interstices of the esparto. For the first few minutes the labour is light enough. Presently, however, it becomes severe; and, although the pressers strain with all their might, they can only succeed in turning the nut by a series of successive jerks, which necessitate the binding of their hands to the handle, for fear, when exerting their utmost strength, they should lose their hold of it, together with their footing on the slippery floor of the lagar, and so come to serious grief.—*Facts about Sherry.*

An Indian Prisoner's Fate.

AH, yes, stranger (said the sergeant, as I reminded him of his promise, soon after our escape from the Indians), I don't mind telling you a bit or two about the varmint.

I remember being out on an exploring expedition, with a friend who was half geologist half naturalist. That was before I joined the United States army.

He proposed to me that we should have six months' wandering in the North-West, among the mountains.

"Rather dangerous work," I said; "won't it be?"

"Nonsense," he said. "All talk. I don't believe the Indians are half as dangerous as they are said to be. If you'll come, and stick to me like a man, I'll pay all expenses, and you shall have a few dollars into the bargain."

"I'm on," I said, slapping my hand into his.

And with as little luggage as we could help, away we went into the woods.

I tell yew, stranger, we had a wander, we did, for

months; and wonderful parts we visited. My friend was all for up the mountains.

(The sergeant grew animated as he went on, and dropped the Yankee twang.)

Ah, it was grand, and a man wants to travel on foot to see the wonders of the place.

We look up at the mountains which we are ascending, and new tops appear as far off as the first we saw. On one of the highest peaks sits an enormous frog, ready to leap down and crush us, but he thinks better of it, and keeps his lofty seat. He has been sitting there playing "bogie" or "scarecrow" for ages. He is presumed to have a strong attachment to his position. He is a stone, and is of that mountain a part. The air comes charged from the snowy range, and is delightfully refreshing.

At last we reach Forks Creek, near Denver, and the junction of Forks Creek and Clear Creek. Here we see the latter as clear as its name implies. It is Forks Creek, a smaller stream, which falls into it and makes mud of it. Here we leave Clear Creek and commence to run up Forks Creek, which is quite as serpentine as Clear Creek. Forks Creek is given over to gulch mining and other mining. The whole bed of the creek is being dug up and washed for precious metals. Sluices abound the whole length of it. The digging, the sluices for washing "pay dirt," the stamp mills, &c., for crushing quartz, make the muddy water. The gulch mining goes on under our eyes. We see the miners shovelling the dirt into the sluice, or, where the distance is too great, wheeling it there in barrows to be washed. After the "Melican Man" is done with the dirt, and has got everything out of it that he cares to bother to get, the "heathen Chinee" will come after him and wash it again, and make that process pay. We pass a few huts at intervals, and miners from China and elsewhere. A Chinese village of a dozen huts attracts our attention. Chinese characters are inscribed on every door. A dozen Celestials have ranged themselves in a row to have a look at us.

I was a little curious to know what these Rocky Mountain working miners do with their money, and was told, "Whenever they get a little ahead they go off prospecting, or put it in a hole—that is, a mine—and when they get through start afresh; or if they do not go a prospecting, or invest in a hole, they come to Denver and drink or gamble, or both, till they are bankrupt.

At last we reach the Divide. Here, on the top of the Divide, is a little lake a mile in circumference. It is fed by a mountain spring. The Divide is what its name implies. It is the top of the watershed, the dividing ridge between the Platte and the Arkansas Rivers. From it the water flows in opposite directions—north to the Platte, south to the Arkansas.

Pike's Peak, the highest point on the range, was the next spot we made for, and here we spent a couple of days in going up; and certainly the view over mountain, cañon, river, and prairie was one to see.

Ah, it was a wonderful life. Now we were roasted by the sun, now frozen in the snow; sometimes amongst the bisons, sometimes after the antelopes.

More than once we travelled with the greasers—Mexican ox-team drivers, you know—and at one place we stopped to see the Mexicans camped on the

ground in the streets beside their teams, and some of them sit round their camp fire, doing nothing. Others are at a Mexican fandango. We look in at that. Four dilapidated musicians discourse some kind of dance music from a rickety platform. The men move round in the dance in the most listless way, as if it were a task, and they were tired of it. They are in full dress, heavy boots, hats, working dress. The girls are plain to ugliness, constantly chewing something, and are silent and stupid.

But that's just like me; I get wandering away from what I meant to tell you about the Indians.

We had several meetings with them, and at one time settled down amongst the Crows, who were very friendly and sociable with us.

We hunted with them, and fished with them; listened to their chiefs telling stories about how many enemies they had slain in battle; and if we would have consented to wear blankets, moccassins, and paint, and a few eagles' feathers in our hair, they would have given us wives, and made us chiefs.

We were with them a couple of months, and all the time they were warning us to be on our guard against the Sioux, who were wandering about on the war-path.

We had heard so many stories about Indians, and scalping, and the rest of it, that we paid very little attention to what they said; and so it happened that one day we were out on the prairie, far away from our friends the Crows, and busy picking specimens of some particular plants my friend wanted to get.

Well, you'll say that was as harmless a pursuit as two grown men could be engaged in, and puts you a good deal in mind of being children, picking buttercups and daisies in the fields.

At last we were about tired, and I proposed a smoke.

"Let's have a feed first," said my friend, bringing out some buffalo steak which he had brought with him.

So I set to and made a fire, over which we cooked the steak, and made a hearty meal, after which we each had a pipe, and being pretty drowsy dropped off to sleep.

I sha'n't forget that waking, stranger. I couldn't understand it for a moment or two. All it seemed to me was that I had been turned over on my face, somebody was sitting upon me, my hands were dragged behind my back, and they were being lashed together by the wrists with deer-thongs; after which I was dragged round and made to stand up, to find myself in the midst of seven half-naked Indians, wearing collars of the claws of the grizzly bear, while their long hair was full of eagles' plumes.

My friend was standing close by me, held by the Indians, and apparently stunned by the suddenness of the attack.

"They must be Sioux," said the poor fellow. "They'll let us go directly, seeing we are peaceable people."

Poor fellow! He could not believe that there were such devils under the sun, and he expected that they would let us go.

So did I, at first; but I soon found out my mistake.

The fiends had got a couple of palefaces, and it

soon became evident that they meant to have revenge on us for some injury that had been done to them.

We tried to speak to them, and explain, but could not make them understand; while, in their savage jargon, they began to mock and gibe at us, striking us with the handles of their tomahawks, pricking us with the points of their knives, and generally working themselves up.

At last, with bursts of mocking laughter, two of the fiends seized me, and held me, while the other five got hold of my poor friend, and stripped him of every rag he had on.

What followed is almost too horrible to tell you, stranger, but it will let people who believe in Indians have some idea of what sort of creatures they are.

As I said, they stripped him of every rag he had on, and then fastened stout deer-thongs to his wrists and ankles, evidently for the purpose of binding him; and I was a bit puzzled as to what was to come next, till I saw one of them go down on his knees, and drive four stout pegs, such as they tethered their horses with, into the ground.

Directly after, in spite of his cries and resistance, they threw the poor fellow down on his back, and one going to each thong, they spread-eagled him, and bound his wrists and ankles to the pegs.

They surely aint going to serve me the same, and then leave us to perish, I thought to myself; and then I began to think of all the horrors of being left there to starve, strivin hour by hour to get free, when a horrible cry from my poor friend made my hair stand on end, as the great drops began to trickle down my forehead.

I struggled with the wretches, and tried to get away; but they had me fast and quite helpless, forcing me to see all that went on, and I saw it without fainting, though I've often wondered since how I could see it and yet live.

When the poor fellow, who was fastened so securely down, gave such a horrible shriek, and kept following it up with others, it was because he saw what these demons were going to do; and it was this.

They collected together a heap of all the dry twigs, grass, *ag*-brush, and buffalo dung they could find and piled it up in a heap over the poor fellow's stomach, and kept laughing, dancing, and chattering like so many demons as they did so; and then—oh, it was horrible!—they took a lot of the red-hot ashes of our fire upon their tomahawks, and set light to the heap they had made.

It blazed up directly, and burned furiously; and as I listened to my poor friend's shrieks of agony and appeals for mercy, I believe I went mad, as I struggled, bit, kicked, and tore at my enemies.

But it was all in vain: they forced me round close to where this horrible torture was going on, and compelled me to look on.

It was not very hard work for them, at least; for exhausted by my efforts, and fascinated by the horror of the scene, I stood there, with my hair bristling and eyes half starting from my head, looking down at the horrible wretches, as they shouted, danced, and bounded round the man whose vitals were being burned out.

They howled, they yelled with delight at every agonized leap and bound their victim gave; mocking

his shrieks, imitating his cries, and laughing to one another as they pointed down at the writhing wretch.

His agony must have been awful; and from where I stood I could see the blood start from the veins of his wrists in his struggles to get free—see the agonized contortions of his face and body as he heaved and cast off the burning fire, only for more to be heaped up upon him, to crackle and blaze; while the hideous smell of burning flesh was frightful.

Then they mockingly turned to me, where I was held, and laughed, and pointed, and gave me to understand that as soon as one victim was dead my turn would come.

By degrees the poor wretch's struggles grew more

who seemed to be the leader, shouted something to the two who held me, and I felt that my time had come; for one of them thrust his hands inside the collar of my shirt, and was about to rip it off, when I heard a tremendous yell, the war-whoop of the Indian, and I was cast loose; for the seven wretches made a dash for their tomahawks and knives, which they had thrown down behind their victim's clothes.

Half of them were too late; for in a misty state I saw the rush of a number of dark figures, heard the crashing blows of tomahawks, the ping of arrows, and the dull thud of knife blows.

There were yells, cries, shrieks, and groans, and then all was over, except a struggle going on between



"COMPELLED ME TO LOOK ON."—(Page 96.)

feeble, as the fire glowed and burned more fiercely; his starting eyes grew fixed in their stare, his mouth, opened widely to utter a fearful yell, remained unclosed, and his struggles ceased, so that I knew that a merciful end had come to his sufferings; while I asked myself if all one had read of devils could equal the acts of these yelling wretches, who were dancing about in the excess of their joy.

The fire was glowing, crackling, and sputtering, and the wretches who held me were forcing me more forward, so that I might see more of my friend's horrible death; and I was trying to mutter a few prayers, asking for a speedy end to my own sufferings when I was tied down to share my friend's fate, when one,

two knife-armed savages; the new-comers being unable to interfere, lest they should kill their friend, as the men writhed, twisted and turned like serpents in the thick prairie grass, till one bronzed figure got his arm loose, plunged his knife point into his prostrate foe, and then, leaping up, fled.

As he ran, I saw it was the leader of the little band of Sioux; and he uttered a mocking laugh as he ran away like the wind.

His triumph did not last long, for six arrows flew more quickly, and I saw him leap up, and fall upon his face.

I was very sick and giddy, but I could make out that the new-comers were our friends of the Crow

tribe, and that the wretches who had attacked us were all dead. I saw all this, and then that my friends were stooping over each enemy, to pass a knife round the head, and then tear off the bleeding scalp. I say I saw all this, and then that they had turned to cut loose my poor companion, and then—then I fainted.

He was quite dead, poor fellow! and for weeks afterwards I was on the way to the long home; but I got better just as the enemies' scalps grew dry in the lodge of the Crow chiefs who had come in search of us, knowing that there were Sioux out on the war-path, and they came just in time to save my life.

I've killed a few since then, stranger, and I guess I mean to wipe out a few more.

For Husband and King.

CHAPTER II.

A FORTNIGHT had passed, and no more messengers came with news from Lord Chief Justice Sir John Bankes to his lady in Corfe Castle. But news of another sort did come—of fighting, and disaster, and ruin to the King's cause; of Cavaliers cut down and Roundheads rampant; of the Royalists driven hither and thither, like chaff before the Iron-sides of Cromwell; and Lady Bankes raged up and down in her room, crying, like Shakspeare's heroine, "Would that I were a man!"

At last, after bad news came worse, not of Sir John Bankes or of Captain Lawrence, for they seemed to have dropped out of sight, but of orders having gone forth that all the strongholds were to be reduced, and that a body of men, under Sir William Earle, were on their way to Corfe.

"What shall we do, aunt, dear?" cried Avice, whose eyes were red with weeping.

"Do?" cried Lady Bankes; "act like heroes, child! Go and tell the men to gather in the hall."

"But there are only five, aunt dear."

"So much the better," said Lady Bankes; "they will be easier to command."

Five minutes later the men were gathered, waiting in the hall, and the women-servants at the other end all standing in respectful silence, when Lady Bankes and her niece walked in and sat down.

"I came to tell you," said Lady Bankes, in a firm voice, "that there is a report that these Puritan scoundrels are coming to dismantle Corfe."

"Yes, my lady," said a sturdy, old grey-bearded servant of the house; "but Corfe Castle has teeth, though only five, and they can bite."

"And so they shall, Francis," cried Lady Bankes, joyfully. "I meant to strike that key, but you have struck it for me. You all have spirit, then, to help me against the rebels?"

"Speaking for all here, my lady," said Francis, "yes, we have; for hasn't our master left us here in charge of his dear lady?"

There was a murmur of applause here from all the servants.

"Then I count upon you all," said Lady Bankes, "and we'll show the Roundheads that Corfe Castle is loyal till his Majesty sends to relieve us."

"Your ladyship shall have our service to the

death," said Francis, sturdily. "The place is strong, and we are well armed. It will be a brave party who takes it from us."

"No one shall take it from us," cried Lady Bankes, and she marched out of the room with her followers to examine the place.

It was indeed a stronghold, for the moat was very wide, and unusually deep; the walls sturdy, and the gateway well protected. Then there was a drawbridge which cut them off from assault; and five pieces of cannon—though they were at present dismounted. The great drawback was lack of food; but they determined to lay in a store, and then, with the good supply of water from the well that was in the castle, they felt ready to resist a little army.

Unfortunately the time was too short, and Francis and a couple of the men had hardly got a good load of provisions down in the little town, when there was an alarm raised, and they saw men marching in.

"Here, quick!" cried Francis, and they turned and fled, pursued by a dozen of the men; but they were able, to reach the drawbridge, and crossed, their pursuers halting as soon as they saw their chance was gone.

Ten minutes after, the drawbridge was up, and the little garrison secure for the present, and determined to do battle sooner than give up. Even the maids had been infused with the warlike ardour of their mistress, and arms were polished and cleaned, and laid ready in a manful spirit that made the retainers smile.

That afternoon and the night passed in peace, but careful watch was kept over the almost impregnable place, to take which, in those days of imperfect engineering, situated as it was on a great scarped rock, the only possible means seemed to be treachery from within, for assault seemed almost madness.

All, then, passed so far in peace, though the little garrison was in a terrible state of excitement, saving their lady, who seemed perfectly calm and cool.

About ten the next morning the look-out announced that a body of forty men were coming up the way that led to the castle, all well armed, and apparently sailors.

"Take no notice of them," said Lady Bankes, "till they come close in, and then ask them their business."

Old Francis grumbled to himself that he should like to speak to them with one of the field-pieces; but he obeyed orders, and took up his position by the gates.

The enemy came up slowly, and apparently with anything but hostile purpose, till they stood on the other side of the moat, when the leader halted his men and shouted to Francis.

"Here, my good man, let down this drawbridge."

"And for what, pray?" was the surly reply.

"That my men may march in," said the leader, coolly.

"Nobody marches in here without orders from my lady, Sir John, or his Majesty the King."

"There, my good fellow, bid your lady come: tell her an officer has a message to deliver to her."

Francis growled audibly, then he summoned one of his men, and sent him with the message, stand-

ing the while at his post, with buff jerkin and morion, armed to the teeth, paying not the slightest heed to the bantering remarks of the rebels, who were somewhat liberal of their jokes.

This was put an end to by Lady Bankes appearing in the gateway.

"You wished to speak to me, sir," she said, haughtily, to the officer leaning upon his sword on the other side of the moat.

"I have an order, madam," said the officer, doffing his hat, "that you should deliver up to me the four field-pieces that are in Corfe Castle."

"May I ask what for?" said the lady.

"As an officer, madam, I never ask questions. I am only obeying my orders," was the reply.

"I will tell you, then," said Lady Bankes; "it seems to me like a well-conceived stratagem to leave me defenceless."

"Defenceless, madam! surely you would not think of defending the castle with four or five men."

"What warrant have you for demanding these cannon?" said the lady.

"I have an order here, madam," said the officer, producing a parchment from his belt, his men murmuring the while at the delay, but gazing curiously down the while into the dark moat.

"Is it signed?" said Lady Bankes.

"Yes, madam, signed by the Parliamentary Commissioners. If you will have the bridge lowered, it shall be placed in your hands."

Lady Bankes laughed softly, and shook her head.

"I cannot do that," she said.

At her request the document was attached to a stone, and thrown across the moat, the officer chafing and annoyed at the delay.

Lady Bankes took the parchment from the hands of her old retainer, who picked it up, read it calmly, then wrapped it round the stone, threw it into the moat, and walked into the castle without a word.

"Your ladyship has not given me an answer," exclaimed the officer.

"Tell him," said Lady Bankes, in a loud voice to Francis, "that it is a beggarly, mean stratagem to rob me of my means of defence, and that future answer will be given by one of the field-pieces themselves."

"The woman's mad!" exclaimed the officer, who had heard every word, and he scanned the place eagerly for a means of entry, walking to right and left; but in the meantime one of the cannons was loaded, run to an embrasure, and, while the officer was some fifty yards from his men, fired, with the effect of making them the leaders and him the follower; for they started off down the descent, running like a flock of sheep, and he did not overtake them till they were well on the way back to the little army.

The little garrison was in high glee at the result of this one shot, and it did more to encourage them than a host of orations—one cannon made to send forty men flying.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed one of the men, "one bark of our dog to send the whole flock of sheep flying."

The day passed in peace, and the next, but there was something on the way; of that Lady Bankes

was sure, for no one approached the castle—no vilager with fruit or fish; and the reason was soon evident, the place was regularly besieged, every approach carefully watched, and it was evident that they were to be starved out.

"We can hold out as long as they," laughed Lady Bankes; "our little garrison will not require so much feeding as their army," which she knew to be about six hundred strong; but she did not reckon on the sea when she thought that they would find it difficult to provide food, and to her disgust she saw small vessels arrive again and again with stores for the little army, while her own stock grew less and less.

An order had been sent up to her by Sir William Earle that she was to give up the place, but it had been treated with as great contempt as the former; and after the general had inspected the place, he had determined to starve the garrison out, perceiving that he could not take it, save at considerable loss of life, and he served under a master who was chary of his men.

Matters upon this grew to a bad pass, and Lady Bankes was general enough to know that without food her little garrison would soon become half-hearted, and ready to give up; so she took Avice into her counsel, and they tried to devise some plan for getting provisions, but there seemed to be no chance except by a sally, and that was too desperate to be attempted.

Matters grew worse, and despair was the general who was taking the place. Lady Bankes went about talking encouragingly; but she could see that her people were failing, and at last her own heart sank as she saw but one chance of escape. For herself she did not care, but she had set herself upon saving the place till her lord returned, and it was gall and bitterness to give it up.

Half-starved and hollow-eyed, she was returning one evening with her niece from the gate, where old Francis stood, stern and determined as ever, when—click!

"What was that, aunt?" exclaimed the girl. "Ah!" she cried, delightedly, "an arrow, and it means help."

"Silly child!" cried her aunt, "it means an enemy."

"No, no," cried the girl, flushed and animated, "it is an arrow shot from outside, with a note, and there's another, and another. Look, aunt, they were shot in before, and they've all got a piece of paper tied to the wings. It's Captain Lawrence!"

"Heaven send it may be," said the lady, as her niece blushed at her hasty words. "But your head is always running on him, child, and he may be a hundred miles away."

She was going to say "slain," but she checked herself, in mercy to her companion, as she took one of the arrows, and read on a scrap of parchment—

"Keep a good heart. Help at hand. Be ready. Ask the enemy to leave you in peace, and say you will give up the guns. They will then relax their watchfulness. Send word to-morrow morning that you will resign them the next day, and at nine at night be ready for a sally. I shall be ready with

men and provisions. Lower the bridge at nine, and come to our help if we need it. Place a spear on the west ward if you have read this.

"JAMES LAWRENCE."

"I should say it was a trap, if I did not know the hand," said Lady Bankes, while Avice stood panting and joyous to think her lover was so near.

On examining the other arrows, they were found to bear precisely the same words, and ten minutes after a spear was placed on the rampart of the west ward, looking quite insignificant, and not likely to attract attention as a signal, though plain enough to the reading of him who had planned the relief.

CHAPTER III.

CAPTAIN LAWRENCE was in attendance upon Sir John Bankes, when one day the news reached them that the castle was invested, and Lady Bankes setting the whole Parliamentary force at defiance.

Sir John looked grave for a moment, and then burst into a roar of laughter.

"How can you laugh at such a time!" exclaimed Lawrence, indignantly.

"I laugh at that woman's dash and bravery," exclaimed Sir John. "The Roundhead scoundrels will not dare to injure her—a woman; but go down, Lawrence, you shall have a little escort of eight or nine stout soldiers; get into the castle if you can, and help them hold out. My Lord Carnarvon's force must be that way before long, to raise this wondrous siege. If you had a hundred men, you would not be so likely to help them as with a few. Well, why do you wait? If I could go, man, I should have been off by now."

"I only waited for your final orders," said the young captain.

And an hour after, at the head of nine stout troopers, he was on the way to Corfe.

They had a perilous journey, and it was only by hiding in the day-time and prowling at night that they were able to get near the castle, and see how matters were going on. There were, however, plenty of people about who loved the castle family, and gladly concealed the men who came to their help, even at the risk of punishment from the Parliamentary troops, who thronged the little town.

Lawrence had been in hiding a week before he found opportunity to crawl one evening to a spot where, unseen by the besiegers, he fitted an arrow to a bowstring, took long and careful aim, and sent the winged messenger flying with the good news of help being at hand. As he shot, he could see the flutter of female garments, and he longed to run to the end of the moat and hail them; but not many yards away, on either side, there were sentries, and he had no time to lose. One arrow might fail, so he shot another; and then, after a short pause, another.

He had hardly sent the last winging when he heard footsteps approaching.

To unstring the bow and thrust it in among the bushes near at hand were an instant's work; and then he went down on hands and knees in the shabby country garb which disguised him, and began to search about.

He had hardly commenced, when a couple of soldiers approached, ran at him, and seized him by the collar.

Lawrence turned upon them a look of the most intense surprise, and shook them off.

"A spy!" exclaimed one, lugging out his sword.

"Did he come your way?" said Lawrence, innocently, and speaking in broad Dorsetshire.

"Come—who came?" said the man, collarling him once more.

"Rabbit," said Lawrence, "I 'most had one."

"Rabbit?"

Good either stewed, roast, or boiled; and they were having such wretched rations! The two Parliamentary soldiers forgot their trade of war, for there was the odour of rabbit collops in their nostrils, and, sheathing their swords, they went down on their hands and knees, to help the "country lout" in his search for the rabbits, with which he assured them the hillside was swarmed.

They did not catch one, but they nearly caught two; and they would have had some, no doubt, if it had not turned so dark. However, they parted the best of friends, Lawrence engaging to meet them the following night, and bring a little dog who was as quick as lightning.

But they did not meet next night. In the morning, from the window of the barn where he lay hid, Captain Lawrence could see with joyful heart the thin shaft and bright head of the spear at the corner of the west ward, and he arranged with his men that they should meet at dusk on the hillside.

All went as the plotters wished. Lawrence saw it before mid-day; for the old servant Francis had been out of the castle as an ambassador, and returned, with the result that soon after the sentries were relieved, and discipline grew lax—for the work was supposed to be done, and all the besiegers had to do was to walk away with the cannon that were to be delivered up the following morning.

Lawrence could hardly contain himself. The ruse had succeeded beyond his most ardent expectations. The soldiery seemed in high glee at their bloodless victory; but he heard remarks which made him shudder, and wonder what control Sir William Earle had over his men.

Still in disguise, he went round from follower to follower, to find them on the alert; and he was on his way back to his own quarters when he encountered one of his companions of the night before, who, with a laugh, said,

"Holiday times now, countryman. We'll have a good hunt to-night."

Lawrence had hard work to get away from this friendly personage, but he left him at last at a tavern, and got back into hiding.

Night at last—a cold grey season, with a haze off the sea, as the Royalists with their leader slowly made from various points for the gates of Corfe Castle. Guessing at the straits in which the besieged were, every man was well laden with provisions; and Lawrence and one follower led a cart drawn by a wretched pony, the cart being heavily laden with meat and flour.

It was a daring step, and he hardly expected to get his load there; still it was worth the trial, and

they could leave it at the last. Both he and his companions carried a stout cudgel, with which they walked, Lawrence using his to apparently belabour the ribs of his wretched pony, whenever they passed any of the soldiery.

They got on very well, looking thoroughly their parts. The military arrangements were lax to a degree, and they had actually turned into the narrow way leading up to the castle before a sentry barred their way, and asked where they were going.

"Eh?" said Lawrence, with hand to his ear, assuming deafness.

"I say, where are you going?"

"Oh! up to castle with the load," was the reply.

"Can't go," was the stern announcement.

But before it was well uttered, a hand was upon the man's mouth, his arms were pinned, and before he had well recovered from his surprise, he was gagged, bound, and carefully lifted twenty paces away from the road, and the cart and its leaders went on, to encounter in the dim light another sentry well on in front of the castle.

"Who goes there?" saluted the daring exploiters.

"Friends, with provisions for the castle," said Lawrence, frankly.

"Back, or I fire," said the sentry—a much sharper man.

"But we've passed the other sentry," remonstrated Lawrence. "Come here and see, it's all right!"

The man came cautiously forward, Lawrence's followers stepping aside and allowing him to pass, when, at one and the same moment, the two sprang upon him.

But the sentry was too much on the alert; he uttered a loud cry, fired his pistol, and ran down the descent, raising the alarm as he went, other pieces being fired on all sides.

"Take the pony's head and run," exclaimed Lawrence, sounding a shrill whistle; and on they went at a trot.

They had not above a hundred yards to go; and as they ran, converging upon them and the entry, came eight grey figures, all in countrymen's garb, and seizing the shafts and sides of the cart, almost ran the pony off his legs.

It was none too soon, for there was the loud rattle of a drum below, lights were appearing, and the sound of tramping soldiery close at hand could be heard.

Another ten yards and they could see the drawbridge, but it was halfway up and rising still.

"Friends—for God and the King!" shouted Lawrence, as they reached the moat edge.

And, after a brief parley, the bridge was lowered again.

There was no time to spare; the little cart was dragged across, and the rough-looking countrymen formed behind to meet the shock of the advancing troops, giving them a pistol volley, which stayed their coming for a few moments; and then the bridge began to rise, and the little fortress was garrisoned by the daring *coup* with ten sturdy soldiers, and provisioned for a week to come.

"This is no time for silliness," said Lady Bankes, austerely, but with a smile upon her face the while, as she came upon the young captain holding her

niece's hands in both his own. "You are a good soldier, but a horribly bad lover, Lawrence."

"Why so, Lady Bankes?" said the young man, smiling.

"Because you choose such bad times for wooing."

"A good soldier only has the breathing times between assaults," he replied. "I am ready now, refreshed and fit for fighting."

"And we are nearly tired," said Lady Bankes. "But no, don't think that; we will help you when the time comes."

"And that will be soon," said Lawrence; "for Sir William Earle is not the man to brook such a piece of deceit as I have practised on him. However, it was a stratagem to relieve those I loved, and I consider myself justified."

Lawrence was right. Soon after daybreak the sentries, who had kept careful watch all night, announced a movement on the part of the enemy; and about an hour later, a herald rode up at the head of a body of men, and demanded that the cannon should be given up as promised.

There was no answer for a minute, all within the castle seeming still as death; and he repeated his summons, when there was a sharp flash, a deafening report, and a curl of grey smoke giving him his answer—defiance—from the cannon's mouth.

The troops drew off then, and an hour's interval followed, which was utilized by the little garrison, who loaded cannon, got ready ammunition and arms of all kinds, placed stones in convenient positions for hurling down upon the heads of those besiegers who attempted to scale the walls; and at last, men and women, they stood in readiness, waiting for the attack which they felt sure must follow.

They had not long to wait, and the women's hearts sank as they saw the lines of well-armed men, in their buff coats, approaching regularly, and with them two pieces of cannon, which were being drawn slowly by oxen pressed for the service from some neighbouring farm.

Lawrence fixed his eye on these with designs of his own, and then stood ready for the attack, leaving the Parliamentarians to get well within range, and even allowing them to prepare to plant their guns, evidently with the intention of battering down bridge and gate.

The infantry kept up a brisk fire upon the walls, but the garrison were all well sheltered; and at last, when he saw his time, Lawrence had his cannon served with such dire effect that at the fourth discharge the attacking party, six hundred strong, turned and fled, the fifth cannon sending them scattering in confusion.

To lower the bridge was the next act, and at the head of his men Lawrence dashed over it, and after the fugitives.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Lady Bankes, "how rash."

Lawrence, however, followed to such effect that, before the pursuers could get up the ascent again, two of his men were driving nine oxen up into the castle, and their leader and ten others covered them, retreating slowly, and helping the driving till the bridge was crossed; and the men cheered, for there was provender now for long enough to come.

"There, captain," said Lady Bankes, meeting Lawrence, "take the command—I give up; only let me act still under your orders. I should never have thought of that."

They were hard, watchful times that followed, and no season for love: a sweet, encouraging look, though, from Avice when they met was all that Lawrence needed to send him in good heart to the battlements, where no sentry was half so watchful night and day.

At last, from certain appearances, it became evident that a fresh attack was to be made; and Lady Bankes read in her defender's stern brow that he anticipated danger.

"You are afraid," she said to him in a whisper, as they stood alone by one of the cannons.

"Yes—that they will succeed," said Lawrence, quietly. "It will be a bloody fight now, for they dare not go away beaten, completely set at nought by such a handful."

"Then let them buy their victory dearly," said the lady. "They are rebels, so spare them not. I and my women will give good account of some of them, if they will not let us be in peace. It is none of my seeking. I would not that the blood of one should be on our hands; but this is my husband's home, and I defend it for him against all comers."

"It shall be a dearly bought victory if they do take the place," said Lawrence; "but," he said, brightening up, "if we should chase them hence, mind I shall expect my reward."

"If we all live," said Lady Bankes, "conquest or none, Avice is yours—she has, I'm sure, no wish to say you nay."

Lawrence was right once more; for a fierce attack was projected, and the young man's brow bent as he saw the preparations made, and that, as they advanced, some of the men bore scaling ladders, planks, and posts to descend into the ditch, and then carry the walls.

It was about ten o'clock one morning that the Parliamentarians were led boldly up to the attack, to find that the garrison was fully prepared. As soon as their first column appeared, a round shot from the castle plunged into it, and threw it into confusion.

The next shot was directed at a party bearing a scaling ladder, which it cut in two, but the pieces were snatched up, and the men still advanced.

A murderous fire was kept up on the walls, but without effect, the men serving the cannons with rapidity and precision, and causing frightful havoc amongst the troops, who were bravely led, and steadily pressed on till they were so close in that the cannon had to be abandoned for musketry practice, since ladders were being laid ready, men dashed down under the walls, and two brave attempts were made to scale the place, one attack being directed at the middle ward, where Captain Lawrence was stationed with a few soldiers, and the other at the upper end, defended by Lady Bankes, five soldiers, and all the women of the castle.

The thought of that other attack made Lawrence shiver, and almost unnerved him, for he felt that the upper ward must be carried, and then further defence on his part would be hopeless. But he set

his teeth determinedly, and, as the first party crossed the moat, he drove them back in confusion with the vigorous fire he sent at them.

This was but a momentary check, for directly after another body of men rushed forward and crossed, a scaling ladder was reared, and the men mounted up, but before they were half-way Lawrence had seized the head of the ladder, and, in spite of the fire from the other side, hurled it backwards with its shrieking load, to totter for a moment perpendicular, and then fall over with a crash.

The next attempt shared the same fate. The next was thrust sideways, and the men fell into the ditch, to be crushed, drowned, or trampled to death by their companions. And all this time a deadly fire was maintained by the besiegers, and replied to with such power as they could show by the besieged.

Another time the ladder was reared, and Lawrence seized it; but the men had swarmed up too fast this time, and it was beyond his strength to hurl it back; but still he tried, till, through exposing himself so freely, he became a mark for some of the men on the other side of the moat. One hand was clasping the ladder, and with the other he was steadyng himself for a last trial, when he was seen to throw up his hands, stagger for a moment, and the next he would have fallen from the crenelle into the moat, but for the strong arm of Francis, who caught him, and drew him back inside the wall.

There was a loud shout of triumph from the besiegers, a groan from the besieged; but they took heart directly, as the groan was repeated from the other side; for just as the first climber had appeared above the top of the ladder, old Francis, with a clubbed musket, dashed him back. Another shared his fate, and another; and then, in the pause which followed, the old servant called a trooper to him, and, in spite of the firing, they together raised the ladder, dragged it sideways, and, amidst shrieks, yells, threats, and blows from those below, got it so that it overbalanced, scratched along the wall for a few feet, and then fell with a frightful crash upon the other, which lay broken below.

Thus done there was a pause, the attacking party rescuing their injured comrades from the ditch, and the besieged gladly drawing breath.

Meanwhile a fierce attack had been made upon the upper ward, successfully resisted though by Lady Bankes, and the soldiers and servants with her. The raising of a ladder here was the signal for large stones to be toppled down upon the climbing party; and these were so deadly that, after awhile, the scaling ladders were abandoned, and the Parliamentarians contented themselves with firing whenever a head was shown upon the wall.

Terribly disheartened at the loss of their leader, the defenders of the middle ward bore Lawrence into the hall, where his appearance was greeted with a loud shriek, as Avice, who was busy tending the wounded, saw him, as she thought, dead; and at this moment Lady Bankes came down to learn the truth, and ran off to the middle ward and gates, to encourage the men against the next assault. But there was no need. Sir William Earle's forces were being drawn off, and a few cannon shot completed their discomfiture.

An hour later a flag of truce was sent up, under which the dead and wounded were carried off, the besiegers losing one-sixth of their number, while though three-parts of the defenders had some wounds to show, no one was seriously hurt.

Next day the siege was resumed, the policy being to starve the garrison out; but before mid-day the little army was in full retreat, chased by a body of Cavaliers under Lord Carnarvon.

Lovers don't die when tended by those they love. Lady Bankes said it was but a scratch that Captain Lawrence had received, and that he played at sham-Abram so as to be tended by her niece; but if so, the bullet which struck the brave young fellow forced its way in at his chest and out at his back, and it was quite a month before, what with fever and weakness, he could be pronounced free from danger, and lie in the castle garden, and dream, and whisper, and feel soft, cool hands arranging his pillow and wiping his brow. For Avice was very constant in her attendance, and when at last, grown stronger, Lawrence held the little maiden in his arms, and asked her to tend him all through life, she said she wished for nothing more, and laid her head on his heart just as Lady Bankes entered, and, laughing softly, crept away.

And, as the story goes, they were married long before the civil wars were over, dwelling still at Corfe, the castle held so bravely by Lady Bankes for husband and for King.

THE END.

The Benevolent Stranger.

THERE were a dozen men in Michigan Avenue tobacco store, yesterday, smoking time away or playing checkers, when a dreary-looking, middle-aged stranger entered, and crowded in behind the stove.

When he had thawed out a little, and wiped a tear from his nose, he looked around, and asked—

"Did any of you read about that terrible cyclone in the East?"

One or two replied that they had seen an account of it.

"Well, gentlemen, there will be the tallest kind of suffering down there this winter, and it is the duty of every man who can spare a dollar to send it to the poor victims. I will now pass around the hat."

He passed it, and when he had completed the circuit it was as empty as when he started.

"Gentlemen, I am surprised and saddened," he remarked. "These people need money, and though I'm a poor man, I'm going to forward my share. Is there any one here who will take a five-dollar bill and send it across the ocean for me?"

"I suppose I could send it," replied the tobacconist, shoving a cigar at the stranger.

"Yes—ahem—could, eh?" replied the latter, as he bit the cigar, and lighted it.

"I'll take it," called out seven or eight others.

"That's good. Do any of you happen to have any fine-cut about you?"

A full pouch was handed out, and he lifted half the contents in his vest pocket, and went on—

"Yes, I want to send them five dollars, and I want some of you to take the money, and scoot it across the ocean in regular business style. I will now go and borrow the five."

There was a grand rush for him, but he was twenty-five feet ahead, and gained as he turned into Fifth-street.

The Egotist's Note-book.

ONE of the greatest difficulties a vocalist has to deal with is that of pitch; for when singing to the accompaniment of a piano, there is often the fact that the voice will only by straining reach the upper notes of a song. Voices, of course, vary greatly, and though some musicsellers publish the same song, say in D, C, and B, for the convenience of singers, as a rule it is one arbitrary key, perhaps too high in pitch for hundreds who would wish to sing it. It may be transposed, can be argued. True, so it can; but even granting possession of the knowledge, what lady or gentleman cares to go through the drudgery of copying a long piece of music into another key? To meet this difficulty, Messrs. Nutting and Normington, of York-place, Baker-street, have hit upon the extremely simple, but in the mechanism ingenious, plan of making what they term the Patent Transposing Piano. The plan is this. By a simple contrivance—in fact, the turning of a handle—moving the whole of the key-board, either to right or left, a semitone at a time, and causing the hammers to strike a note lower or higher at the pleasure of the performer. Thus, if a song is written in C, and the top notes are too high for the singer, the handle is turned, the key-board passes to the left, and while still playing in the key of C, it is a semitone, two, or even three semitones below. In fact, the system enables the player to lower the piano in pitch two whole tones, or say from the key of A down to the key of F. The transposing pianos are very little more costly than those in use, and the principle is applied to instruments of even the lowest price.

Ladies who are always having their pockets picked will be glad to hear that a "duplex unpickable and uncuttable" pocket has been invented and patented. The invention consists of a double pocket, fastened inside the ordinary pocket, and this again secured by a watch fastener. To this chains are attached, and sewn inside, so as absolutely to prevent a pick-pocket from being successful. The patentees have also invented a watch protector, which will be scarcely less useful.

Lord William Pitt Lennox, who is contributing a series of papers on private theatricals to the *Queen*, tells a good story. G. F. Cooke and (he believes) Kemble were playing in "The Gamester," and in some unaccountable manner they contrived to transpose an act.

"What shall we do?" asked Kemble.

"Take no notice," replied Cooke; "we'll give them the missing act."

And the piece went on without the blunder having been perceived by the audience.

The "special attractions" at our old friend Madame Tussaud's just now consist of portrait models of Caxton, General Ignatief, Mr. H. M. Stanley, the Rev. A. Tooth, the late Mr. George Odger, and "Uncle Tom." What a charming collection, and not one of them in the Chamber of Horrors either!

In the Westmeath will case, it was urged as a proof of the mental incapacity of the testator that he had read Mr. Gladstone's pamphlets, and, whilst expressing great admiration for Mr. Gladstone's eloquence, said that he could not exactly understand what the right hon. gentleman meant.

"That," remarked Mr. Justice Warren, drily, "is not at all irreconcilable with mental capacity."

"Noblemen helps" are the latest proposal. They will be engaged by *les nouveaux riches*, and shoddy merchants desirous of entering "society." Their duties will be light—chiefly to educate the family in fashionable ways, and give a tone to the establishment—and it is not absolutely essential that they should sleep on the premises. Decayed noblemen and titled sons will find this a remunerative employment, as their salaries will be liberal, and they need not entirely give up their independence. In all cases the strictest secrecy will be observed.

At a Swiss bathing establishment:—

Frenchman, about to enter his bath, seeing that the thermometer floating in the water marks fifty degrees centigrade: "Fifty degrees, attendant, impossible! That thermometer must be wrong."

"Oh, never mind that thermometer, sir; we keep it for the English."

A distinguished but not wealthy politician recently received a letter from a farmer, who claimed to be his cousin.

"I've found our genealogical tree," said he; "so that I must be right."

The politician replied, "If you have found a tree, there must be a mistake about it; for I never owned even a stick in all my life."

An instance of canine sagacity.

In France it is the custom for the young folks to put their shoes in the chimney on Christmas Eve, ready for the good things which Santa Klaus will bring them.

Last Christmas Eve, at a gentleman's house, just before going to bed, all the young people pulled off their shoes, and carefully deposited them in the fireplace.

A pet dog, who had been quietly watching the proceedings, as soon as the shoes were all placed, wriggled himself out of his collar, and, taking it up in his mouth, went and laid it down beside the shoes, and then departed, looking upon his part of the performance with evident satisfaction.

A gentleman who had left his opera-glasses in a box at a West-end theatre, and had been unable to

recover them, concluded an indignant letter to the manager as follows:—

" Apart from the *moral value* of those glasses, they cost me five pounds."

Young Goldtuft was a bit of a screw. He lighted a cigar, and immediately afterwards pulled a dreadful grimace.

"John, where did you get this cigar from?"

"Out of the blue box, sir."

"Idiot! Didn't I tell you to keep that box for my friends?"

At dessert:—

Lady of the house to one of her guests: "This is a delicious ice, is it not?"

The guest: "Beautiful." Then turning to her neighbour, "I wonder what confectioner's she got it from?"

A poor woman went into the barracks in a provincial town, where the head-quarters of a regiment were situated. The Indian mail had just come in, and she wanted to know if there was any news of her son.

"What's your son's name?" inquired the sergeant.

"Edward Williams," said the woman.

"Williams? Williams?" said the sergeant, as he looked down the lists. "Ah, here it is! He's dead, ma'am."

Thereupon the poor woman began to cry.

"Eh!—eh! my good woman," exclaimed the sergeant. "You musn't cry in the office. Besides, you're not supposed to know anything about it. You must wait for a few days, and then you'll get the regular official notice. It'll be time enough to cry then."

Closefist and his son lived together. They were both exceedingly economical in their habits. Young Closefist was not anxious for his father's death. He knew the old man's money was all right, and there was no necessity to trouble about it.

One day the old man fell dangerously ill, and asked his son to run for a physician.

Closefist, junior, with a long face: "But, father, you know how these doctors charge."

"Never mind, my son, it will be cheaper; funerals are awfully expensive just now."

THE morality of the business world may be considered at a very low ebb, when almost directly a new article has been introduced, and is by universal consent considered a success, worthless imitations of it appear. These imitators trade upon the reputation gained by the original invention, and if not narrowly watched bring it into bad repute. Imitations are in existence of the "New Patent Stocking Suspender," the only safeguard being the name of Almond stamped on every clasp and on the band. Every lady desiring health and comfort should provide herself with a pair of these useful articles, which may be obtained of Mr. H. J. Almond, 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, E.G. Ladies' size, post free, 3s. 2d. per pair. Size of waist required.

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER XXVI.—PROSPECTING.

SI made a last effort, but he was helpless. There was the weight of a heavy man crushing him down; and though he could not see the knife that was raised, he seemed to feel its presence, and in a state of despair tried to nerve himself to bear the blow, when there was a fierce snarl and a bark more like a roar as Si's dog Jack, who had been seeking his master, saw his peril, and hurled himself at Bledsoe.

He fixed his teeth in the muscles at the back of the ruffian's neck, dashing him over so that the knife-blow fell on empty air, while, in the struggle, Si was wrenched from the grasp of Vasquez, and both men stood once more on the defensive.

Bledsoe roared for help, struggling to his feet and running hither and thither with the dog hanging fast where he had set his teeth, and no one helped him, for the conflict had been resumed with renewed fierceness.

This pause had, however, given the order party time to gather, and now, just as Si's party were being slowly driven back, there was a loud cheer, and a couple of dozen friends dashed to their help, turning the tables and putting Vasquez's party to flight—Bledsoe struggling after them for a time, and then, stumbling and falling with the dog on his back, clinging there till a well-known whistle from Si recalled him.

Then, waiting his opportunity, Jake slowly rose, and ran after his friends, his flight being accelerated by sundry revolver bullets sent singing after him, though without effect.

And again the order party were obliged to give up the idea of pursuit, for it would only have been following their enemies into a fatal ambuscade, ending in the loss of many good men, enough of whom already strewed the ground.

For four of their party were dead, and scarcely one unwounded.

They had the satisfaction, though, of counting three of Vasquez's men dead. As for the wounded, they had got off, or had been helped away.

"Jack, old man," said Si, taking his dog's head in his hands, "I guess yew wanted yewre master badly, or yew wouldn't have done what yew did, boy, and saved his life. That knife must have gone very near yewre ribs, my lad, tew or three times; while as for me, I felt as if I was to be its sheath."

Jack uttered a low whine, and rolled his great bullet head about in his master's hands, while his expressive eyes seemed full of pleasure at the result of what he had done.

Now that the fight was over, quite a crowd collected, and the wounded men were borne in to their homes, and the dead buried.

No uncommon task this last, where every man carried weapons of the most deadly construction; but, for all that, the miners preferred that life should be taken in quarrels, and not by the attacks of such a set of desperadoes as infested their neighbourhood

—a band which, in spite of losses, seemed to be ever on the increase.

Si might have been drowned in drinks, would he have stayed, but he was eager to be off; and at last, escaping from the praise and compliments on his bravery which were showered upon him, he took his leave of his friends, the storekeeper and landlord, who had escaped with very slight wounds, and, leaping on his mustang, hurried off.

"It seems as if I was never to come to this place without a fight," said Si; "and yet it's none of my seeking. There, I'll go no more, unless those two send me word that the ranch is up for sale."

He rode on musing for a bit.

"Shall I give up, and seek a home farther away from the settlement?" he asked himself at last.

"No," he exclaimed, with a fierce look of determination in his eye, "I carved that thar home out of the wilderness, and it's mine. Let anybody meddle with it at his peril."

He rode on fiercely frowning, for the figure of Vasquez seemed to rise up in his path, with his ruffianly band of scoundrels.

"He'll dog me out, and find me. He's sure to," said Si. "Oh, wasn't the world wide enough for him that he must come and settle only a few miles from me?

"If they come across the bit of desert here—track us out—good God!—Rewth!—my boy!—that poor girl Patsey!"

"Let them come!" he said, savagely. "Only let us have warning of their coming, and some of them shall taste rifle bullet before they get to do any mischief; but it's terribly hard when I've got all so snug and prosperous. What devil tempted me to go up to the gulch, to my fall?"

He glanced down at his blood-stained shirt, and examined a scratch or two upon his arms. Then, seeing to the loading of his revolver, and the rifle slung at his back, he rode on, looking grim and determined—a dangerous man to disturb in his little mountain stronghold, even for Vasquez and his band.

Meanwhile Kate Townsend had been terribly alarmed at the firing and shouts of those engaged, little thinking that her old friend Si Slocum was one of the most prominent of the combatants, and that his wife was dwelling only a few miles to the south.

"I don't like the sound of this, Wallace, my lad," said Mr. Townsend, who had seemed to brighten and grow younger with the brisk labour of the journey, which had been one of many weeks.

"I'll go out and see," said Wallace, rising from the tub which had formed his seat, and upon which he had been studying the rough map of the region.

"No, no," cried Kate, anxiously, as a perfect volley of revolver shots was succeeded by shouts, oaths, and cries.

"I'll not run into danger," he said, pressing her hand before hurrying out, to return soon with the intelligence that the inhabitants of the gulch had been resisting the attack of a body of ruffians who had come down from the mountains.

"That looks well for law and order," said Mr. Townsend. "Which side has got the better?"

"Respectability!" said Wallace; and then with a meaning look at Mr. Townsend, "There was more noise than anything else, sir, for these people seem to believe in the effect of firing off a revolver. One would have thought by the noise that there was a pitched battle being fought."

Kate looked more reassured at these words; but their effect was destroyed by Mickey Doran, who came hurriedly in, looking quite scared.

"Oh, bedad," he exclaimed, "they've been going it out there, sur! They've killed about a hundred poor creatures, more or less!"

"Less, decidedly, Mickey," said Wallace, laughing.

"Oh, I don't know, sur; they're lying out there as thick as thick."

"And you're lying here as thick as thick, Mickey," said Wallace.

"Shure, sur, I only sthretched it a bit, for I niver see anything to aqual it in New York or Oireland. The divils don't foight dacintly wid a bit of a shtick, but it's use them rayvolvers and bowie knives they do continual."

"Ah, well, Mickey, it's all over now," said Wallace; and so it proved, the landlord coming in soon afterwards with one arm tied up, where it had been channelled by a bullet, and reporting all quiet, at the same time treating his own injury as a trifle.

The outbreak seemed to clear the moral air for the time being, and Wallace had no difficulty in calming Kate's fears, as he told her more about the outbreak—as much, indeed, as he knew himself, though unfortunately he did not, as a stranger, learn that Vasquez, his former rival, was the leader of the party.

They were most hospitably treated by the store-keeper, though the accommodation was terribly rough. In fact, the absence of the female element at Randan Gulch was no improvement to the place.

Still it must rapidly improve, Wallace thought, and he had had a strong proof on the previous night that the peaceably-disposed people banded strongly together for mutual protection and aid. So he thrust aside various unpleasant thoughts concerning the safety of Kate and her father, and lectured Mickey pretty strongly on the advisability of keeping a quiet tongue in his head.

He spent the next two days in quiet observation; visited the gold diggings, and studied the mountain formation to the northward.

The following days he spent in going south; and crossing the little desert to the mountains on that side, he carefully examined ravine after ravine, climbed peaks, and toiled about, incessantly chipping the rocks with his hammer, and loading himself with specimens; and though three or four times he was within a mile of Si's farm, he never saw a soul; while in that great, unfrequented wilderness, high up in the hills, the presence of one explorer was not likely to be noticed.

At last, one evening, he had returned to the Townsends quite worn out, bruised and battered with falls, his clothes torn, and a general aspect of dilapidation visible—for he had slept several times, rolled in his rug, beneath an overhanging rock, living upon whiskey and biscuits.

Poor Kate had been in agony, fearing that some-

thing had befallen him, and her pale face showed the anxiety she had felt during his absence.

But she brightened up as she saw his eager looks, and he was about to unfold his doings when the storekeeper entered.

"Glad to see yew back, stranger," he said. "Thowt the Injins had got yew."

"I never saw one," said Wallace, smiling.

"Good for yew," said the storekeeper. "Been prospecting, I reckon?"

"Yes," said Wallace.

"Down south, I calkeelate?"

"Yes, down south."

"Then, if yew'd asked me, I could have saved yew the trouble. There's no gold within a hundred miles to the south'ard. Go north, stranger—go north, if you want to find a good pocket. Good night."

He left them, to the great relief of all, for Wallace was eager to tell of his discoveries.

"Well, my boy," said Mr. Townsend, "so it's all disappointment, is it, eh? Out with it; I shall not mind. We've come on a wild goose chase, eh?"

Wallace Foster remained silent for a few moments, and Kate crossed to his side, with all a young girl's tender sympathy, to show him that she was ready to stand by him in his trouble.

"No, sir," said the young man at last, "I have not been deceived. The mountain range and its gullies turn out just as I hoped—no, no, far better. Why, sir, it teems with veins of silver. We must get as long a tract of it as we can; and as it is very sterile we shall have no difficulty, though there are some beautiful fertile glades. Look here, sir, look here," he cried, turning out a dozen or so of pieces of heavy rock, some of which were masses of silver ore, others silver and antimony.

"And are you sure that's silver?" said Mr. Townsend, dubiously—"might it not be tin?"

"Tin, sir, is found among quartz rock, with black sparkling grains. No, sir, that is not tin; you may trust me to know the metal when I see it."

"But gold—did you find any traces of gold?" said Mr. Townsend.

"Not a sign, sir; neither did I expect it. Silver is in abundance; and if we can get a thousand acres or so of that land, and establish our claim with the usual fee to Government, we are wealthy enough to satisfy the most exacting. Kate, darling, you shall return to your old style yet."

"Indeed, I have no wish to return to it," said Kate, smiling. "I could be happy without."

"What is to be done, then?" said Mr. Townsend, eagerly.

"We must see about obtaining the grant of land directly," said Wallace; "but, oddly enough, I hear there is to be a sale in a few days of the very portion I should choose, with a large farm or ranch lying to the south. We must attend the sale, and buy it."

"Suppose we consult the landlord," said Mr. Townsend.

"No, no," exclaimed Wallace. "That would be to raise the price directly. Let's keep perfectly quiet, and then attend the sale, and purchase as mere speculators. We shall then avoid powerful

opposition; for if it is imagined that the land is valuable, there are men here with gold enough to upset all our plans."

Mr. Townsend nodded.

"You are quite right, my boy," he said. "I yield to your judgment; but all the same, I should like to be sure that what you have brought is silver."

"That you shall soon see," said Wallace, going to the little chest that contained his tools and ammunition. "But stop; let's see if our friend the landlord is here."

The storekeeper, however, had shut up for the night, and had gone to discuss the state of affairs at the bar. So Wallace closed the door of the little stove, and made it roar up, while he took out a small, yellowish-looking earthen pot, that had once been round, but before baking had been pressed at the sides, so as to make it somewhat square, with a little pinched-up spout or lip at each of its four corners.

"Why, what's that?" inquired Kate.

"That little vessel is formed of a clay that will stand any amount almost of heat, and is called a crucible," said Wallace, smiling at the interest taken in his work, and pausing to press the girl's soft hand before going back to the chest, and taking out a packet of what on opening seemed to be dirty-looking salts or crystals.

"Let me have all the explanations," said Kate, laughing.

"Good, then," said Wallace, "you shall."

And as he spoke Mr. Townsend drew up his stool, evidently taking the greatest interest in the proceedings.

"I see I shall have to talk to you like a lecturer on chemistry, so here goes. This salt which I have in this paper was brought by me from New York for the very purpose I am going to put it to. It is nitrate of potash, or, as it is commonly called, saltpetre, one of the chief constituents in gunpowder."

"But," began Kate, "you are not going to make gunpowder."

"No," was the reply; "but wait. Now, see, I am going to smelt this silver ore—that is to say, I am going to submit it to the action of fire, so as to drive away certain bodies that are combined with it, and get the silver pure, or nearly pure. See."

He took a piece of the rich ore, and with some difficulty broke it into fragments, and powdered these up with the hammer, half filling the little crucible with the coarse dust, and then placing it with the tongs in a glowing place in the little stove.

"I see," cried Kate; "now that will melt."

"Not with that heat," said Wallace; "it will require a far greater heat than that. Here comes in the nitrate of potash."

He waited till the little vessel began, with its contents, to get red-hot; and then taking up the crystals of saltpetre, he threw them into the crucible one at a time, with the effect of making them burn with a brilliant bluish-white blaze, and increase the heat of the crucible to such an extent that, as he kept on throwing in the crystals for some time, the little vessel seemed to be at white heat.

"There," he said at last, "I think that will be enough to prove my experiment."

"But I don't see any silver," said Mr. Townsend, gazing through his spectacles at the dirty mass of ash in the crucible, a portion of which seemed in a state of fusion. "I'm afraid, my boy, that you have been deceiving yourself."

Kate, however, had too much confidence in her lover to doubt him, and there was a calm look upon his countenance which told of the confidence given by knowledge; while, as the fire glanced on his sun-tanned face, Kate thought she had never before seen him look so handsome.

"I could have tested this in another way, Mr. Townsend," said Wallace, not heeding his remark. "The general plan, as used by the miners, is to pound up the ore very small, wash it, and amalgamate it with quicksilver, which is afterwards regularly distilled away, leaving the metallic silver. This is, however, a very simple plan; and now we will see which of us is right."

As he spoke, he took up the tongs, lifted up the glowing crucible, now only of a dull red heat, and turned it upside down on the earth that formed the hearth of the stove; when Kate uttered a cry of joy, for in the bottom of the crucible, where it had evidently run down from the stony particles with which it had been before combined, was a little round knob of virgin silver, frosty white, and roughened with the crudities which clung to it.

"There, Mr. Townsend," said the young man, taking up the little knob with the tongs, and dipping it into a vessel of water close by to cool it, when he handed it to the old man. "There, Mr. Townsend, is a specimen of the silver of the range."

"Yes," said Mr. Townsend, thoughtfully, as he took a dollar from his pocket, and placed the specimen upon it; "that is evidently silver. But, my dear boy, is there much of it?"

"Tons upon tons," said Wallace. "Enough to keep a large body of men at work bringing it from the ore to the metallic form. There, Mr. Townsend," he continued, as he 'put away all traces of his experiment, "what have you to say now?"

"Nothing, my boy, nothing," said the old man; "except to ask your pardon for my doubts. Wallace, my boy, I am getting to a state of life when simple things satisfy me, but for you I am heartily glad—for both of you. Kate, darling, I was a blind old bat once in my prejudices. Wallace, my boy, I can congratulate you upon finding your silver mine. You found a gold one years ago when you won this silly little maiden's heart."

Nothing more was said that night; and during the next few days Wallace thought it would be better to keep perfectly quiet, for the auction sale of the Mountain Ranch, as he heard it called, was to take place directly, and he waited patiently for the day.

It dawned at last, and some roughly printed bills were now displayed on the various stores announcing the sale on that day, at three o'clock, by public auction, of the tract of land called Slocum's Ranch, and the thousand or so acres lying north in the mountains, and bordered by the desert.

To the surprise of several, Vasquez had made his appearance at the gulch, in company with Coyote Tobe, Jake Bledsoe, and about a score of his men; but they were very quiet, and in spite of the reward

offered for his capture, no one seemed disposed to reopen the terrible duel that had been fought out a short time before.

"Hadn't we better get back?" said Tobe; "there's a sale on to-day, and the place will be full."

"Yes," said Vasquez, "the sale of Slocum's Ranch. That's the first blow at the blackguard which I mean to strike. I shall buy that ranch."

"Buy it?" said Tobe.

"Yes, buy it," said Vasquez, quietly.

And then, feeling that it would be better to keep out of sight, he strolled into one of the bars.

"Rather odd the name of the ranch, isn't it?" said Wallace, pointing to it on the bills—"commonly called Slocum's Ranch.' No fear of its belonging to our old friend Si, eh?"

"No, hardly likely," said Mr. Townsend, who was growing excited at the idea of the tremendous purchase they were about to make. "If he had anything to do with it, he would know its value."

"Perhaps not."

"Well," said Mr. Townsend, "if it should—bah, what stuff we are talking. I wonder what became of Si Slocum, though; I should like to see him again."

"Is there any other of your old friends you would like to see, Mr. Townsend?" said a harsh voice.

"Vasquez!" exclaimed Mr. Townsend, aghast.

And he started back, for that worthy stood stroking his moustache, and smiling at him in a demoniacal manner.

Chambers of Horrors.

THEY are in a house in a corner of Great Scotland-yard—a place we are accustomed to associate, and rightly, with the police.

Everything looks dirty and forlorn about this building, which has the natural sombreness of its exterior heightened by iron bars to the windows, and by all the dingy blinds being drawn down, as if some one lay dead there. There is no one dead there, however, though it contains innumerable relics and mementoes of those who are civilly dead to the eye of the law, of those who have suffered the last penalty of the law, and of those whose lives have been murderously wrested from them, while their murderers remain still undiscovered. In addition to these, its large storehouse of rooms contains property of all kinds found on convicted thieves, and the properties of which they have been found in unlawful possession, but which, though in some cases of great value, and often advertised, have never been claimed.

Here, too, are collected all the weapons connected with undiscovered crimes, the clothes of the victims, forged notes, forged bills, false sovereigns, beards, wigs, moustachios, rope ladders, skeleton keys, empty cash-boxes, knives, razors, hatchets—most of the three latter being more or less blood-stained.

After a glance round the well-kept post, and a peep into one of the criminal registers, just to get an idea of the admirable system of police book-keeping, the doors of an iron safe were unlocked, and the courteous custodian drew out shelf after shelf and drawer after drawer filled with valuable

gold and silver watches, gold chains, rings, pins, studs, well-filled cash-boxes, silver spoons and cups, snuff-boxes, and jewellery of all kinds, belonging to prisoners serving various terms of penal servitude. Proceeding upstairs, one saw, as each store-room door was opened, the racks and shelves crammed with bundles of clothing, rolls of flannel and cloth, boxes, bags, portmanteaus, boots and shoes, hats.

The rooms are just like the store-rooms at a large pawnbroker's; and just as there every conceivable thing that can fetch money has been pledged, so here every conceivable thing that is worth money has been stolen.

For instance, in one corner are three large sacks of cochineal, a smaller sack of opium, and one large case of jalap, in all worth between £700 and £800, the proceeds of a robbery, of course; yet here they have stayed for thirteen years unclaimed. Opposite these is a large tin bath, which we must own is puzzling. Its size precludes the possibility of its having been stolen from a shop unobserved; and if stolen from a house, why was not something of more value and more portable taken?

Portmanteaus, travelling bags, and railway rugs are, of course, here to any extent, as might be expected; so also are paper bundles of gold and silver chains, of all sorts of lengths, patterns, and values. These will ultimately go into the bullion department; but the Black Museum has not yet been completely arranged. Church property seems in peculiar favour with thieves, for there are Bibles, prayer-books, pew cushions, hassocks, and money-boxes torn from the walls, with general vestry goods enough to set up a parish. Indeed, these church fixtures are so abundant, and all unclaimed, that if your conductor told you they had part of a steeple or a peal of bells in the back yard, you would not feel very much surprised.

Boots, shoes, tools (engineering and mechanical), tin cases, large earthenware pans, garden implements, garden engines, brass fittings, door handles, bells, coppers, bales of cloth, umbrellas, whips, clothing, feathers, tea chests, bags of coffee, perambulators, a bicycle—everything, in fact, from a theodolite to a thimble—are here. Provisions, such as hams, tongues, cheeses, &c., are never kept, nor are such things as easily decay detained long. A few days ago a bundle of raw unclaimed silk was sold for £150.

Still, in each room there is an immense mass of things that should never be kept there at all; for they answer no good purpose, and merely cumber the space. Among these, are tiers of bundles of prisoners' clothing, which, in spite of every effort in the way of cleanliness and disinfectants, give the rooms a close, ill-smelling atmosphere.

Spiritualists should visit this place, for they will see there some curious relics of noted professors of the art, who have all been convicted as rogues and vagabonds. One of these is worth especial mention, not for its extent, for it only consists of a long black robe with a red belt, a wand, a flowing white wig and beard. These properties belonged to Herman Zendavesta, *nd* Moses Simon, and they are rendered noteworthy from the extent and lucrative nature of

the business he did on such a small stock-in-trade. When this scamp was seized, his regular business books and letters were seized with him also, and these show that this impostor was doing a business all over the country of the actual value of from £130 to £150 a week. Most of the letters from the country—all enclosing a stamped envelope and two-and-sixpence worth or five shillings' worth of stamps—are of the usual grossly ignorant kind, from females anxious to have descriptions of their future husbands, when they are to meet them, what money they are to have, and so forth.

It is, however, in the top front room—like all the others, with its blinds drawn close—that the real and repulsive horrors of this Chamber of Horrors are garnered. Here is almost every kind of firearm, and every kind of cutting or thrusting weapon, with which murder can be committed or attempted, and every single one of which has been used for a criminal purpose. What with blood-stained clothes, razors, penknives, hatchets, choppers, daggers, sword-canes, hammers, pikes, spades, and pickaxes, the very room, which is close and stuffy, seems to smell of blood, and leave a horrid flavour in the mouth.

There are articles connected with most of the celebrated murder cases of late years, in which the police have distinguished themselves by acuteness. One of these was the case of a man named Mullins, who was executed in 1860 for the murder of an old lady in Grove-road, Bow. It will be remembered by those who take an interest in great crimes, that Mullins tried to implicate an innocent man as the author of the crime he had committed. He hid some of the property of his victim in a shed near the scene of the crime, and then informed the police that he had seen a man named Emms put something into the shed soon after the murder. The police thereupon searched the shed, and found a parcel comprising a £10 cheque, four silver spoons, and some lenses. Mullins's behaviour excited the suspicion of the detectives, of whom Sergeant Tanner, who afterwards distinguished himself as a detective in the famous Müller case, was one, and he was arrested along with Emms, the man whom he had falsely denounced. In the search which followed, there was found in Mullins's house the hammer with which he had beaten in his victim's skull, still bearing blood stains, which proved to fit into a wound over the eyebrows; some blood-stained clothing, some tea-spoons, and a broken key and some pieces of twine which were identified as belonging to Mrs. Heraming.

In another part of the room is a still more numerous collection, which illustrates the famous Wainwright case. There is the piece of brown discoloured skin, still distinctly showing a scar, by which the body of the unfortunate Harriet Lane was identified. There are the velvet necklace, the hair pins, the light ringlets, and the pad which intercepted one of the bullets by which she met her death; there are the earring and the two buttons found in the grave; there are the hatchet and the spade, the piece of American cloth, and the cord in which the parcels were packed for removal to the Hen and Chickens. Hanging close by are a coat and waistcoat belonging to Wain-

wright, clearly smeared with blood, and therefore produced in evidence, though the medical witnesses seemed to be in doubt whether it was human blood; and lastly there is even the half-consumed cigar and the box of lights which he had in his hands when arrested.

The Lennie mutiny has contributed no inconsiderable number of murderous daggers, knives, and one nondescript weapon, which is called a Labrador man-spear, together with the sea chest and belongings of one of the mutineers.

One thing has been discovered by keeping the blood-stained clothing of murdered persons whose assassins have not been discovered, which is that after fifteen or eighteen months' keeping the blood stains come out almost as brightly as if the blood was newly shed, though the mark remains still quite dry. This curious fact is the case not only with woollen and linen, but even with such things as leather boots.

There are revolvers innumerable, each credited with at least one murder. One of them is the weapon with which a cruel Fenian outrage was committed, when a young bandsman of the Household Brigade was shot in Bloomsbury; while another memento of the same period is a barbarous home-made weapon, constructed out of a piece of pine wood, an old gun barrel, a converted flint lock, and a short bayonet, which is labelled as the armament of John Regan, one of the Fenian heroes who contemplated the capture of Chester Castle.

There is the clothing of the Belgian female desperado, Margaret Dixblanc, and the rope with which she strangled her mistress. A huge pile of letters, secured with a piece of strong cord, is said to be the correspondence of the woman, Margaret Walters, who was executed for child murder in connection with the famous baby-farming case. It is well for the peace of mind of many persons, some in very good positions in life, that this correspondence is not likely ever to see daylight, for the revelations that might be so made would blast many a fair fame.

When one sees the murderous weapons that have been employed at times in assaults on the police, it is possible to form a better idea of the risks run by these fine fellows in the execution of their duty. One of these interesting implements has quite an amusing little story connected with it. It is a "jemmy," or short crowbar, contrived, like the famous truckle bedstead of Goldsmith, "a double debt to pay;" for the ingenious burglar who owned it had cast round the end a mass of lead as big as an egg, so that while one end could be applied to its legitimate purpose of "cracking a crib," the other could be used for performing the same operation on the skull of any zealous policeman who was unpleasantly obtrusive. This enterprising and inventive genius seems to have succeeded in getting into a house in the suburbs; but getting out again was more difficult. He managed to jam himself between two of the iron bars of a window, so that he could neither get one way nor the other. While in this ignominious position he was discovered by the wrathful householder, and prodded in the lower extremities with a sword-stick, until his yell

attracted the attention of the police, when he was incontinently lugged out and transferred to the station-house. A dark lantern, a mask of American leather-cloth, feet covers to deaden the sound, and lastly the notable "jemmy," were brought to light. He openly regretted that he had not had an opportunity of testing the character of his valuable invention on the skull of his captor.

The collection of burglars' implements is very complete, and one capture made a few years since has a special interest, as demonstrating the mode in which iron safes are attacked. These implements belonged to a gang who were taken *in flagrante delicto* in connection with a great warehouse robbery. They consist of a large assortment of skeleton keys, a series of steel and wood wedges, boring implements for cutting through iron shutters, and four different species of crowbars, commencing with the "jemmy," which is perhaps a foot in length, and proceeding under the designations of "sheriff," "alderman," and "lord mayor," until an immensely powerful lever nearly six feet in length is reached. As crowbars of this length would be rather awkward implements to carry about without arousing suspicion, the "alderman" is made with one joint in the middle, while the "lord mayor" can be taken into three pieces. The series of steel wedges are first driven into the opening round the door of the safe by means of hammers with leaden heads to deaden the sound, and when a space has been thus formed so as to admit the point of a crowbar, "jemmy," "sheriff," "alderman," and "lord mayor" are successively brought into requisition until the door is forced.

A light rope ladder, with wooden cloth-covered bar on the top to catch any projection, suggests the means by which so many "portico" robberies are effected. One of the oldest trophies of the museum is a Chartist flag, captured in 1848. It is a handsome one in blue silk, emblazoned in gold letters, "Westminster District"—a memento of the famous 10th of April gathering, and of a period of political excitement which has happily passed away. A feeding bottle with a small phial, labelled "laudanum," attached, recalls the case of a poor little illegitimate victim, drugged to death by the unnatural parent.

Here is the rope by which the unfortunate De Groof, the Belgian, suspended himself to the balloon from which he made his fatal descent at Chelsea a few years since, and there is a collection of apparatus illustrating the means by which the proprietors of racecourse games of chance ensure their own success as against their clients.

Friends of the Claimant will be disgusted to learn that all the articles found on the huge person of that "suffering nobleman" are deposited in the museum. There are a knife, comb, bunch of keys, fusee box, a lock of his hair, a pen box, a pencil case, and three or four white pocket handkerchiefs marked "Tichborne," duly labelled, and waiting to be claimed when, in the fulness of time, he has satisfied the requirements of justice.

We have passed over crape masks for burglars, list shoes to make no noise, spring knives, life-preservers, knuckle-dusters, and all the toilette articles

requisite for a first-rate "cracksman." Of these there is enough and to spare; and, indeed, the same may be said of the whole collection, which is such as only the villainous records of a teeming city like London could produce.

Days with the Dyaks.

THERE are few more interesting places for a traveller than Borneo, that vast tropical island, swarming with animal and vegetable life.

I passed some months there, taking an interest in everything I saw, and I may say that the eye was never weary.

It is a land of heat and moisture, where the trees grow to a monstrous size in the vast forests, and in every opening the brilliant green of the under-growth is broken up by the gorgeous blossoms of the various tropic flowers.

Where the flowers fail to give a sufficient brilliancy of colouring, the birds come in.

There are the great-billed toucans, that look so heavy-headed till they are watched, and one sees that the heavy-looking bill is light as paper. These birds, with their orange, sulphur, and golden yellow throats, have a wonderfully striking appearance, and especially as their backs and wings are of a rich black.

Then there are the trogons, soft-feathered birds of the cuckoo family, but whose plumage is of every tint of burnished metallic green.

In England we have one kingfisher, a most brilliant little bird. Out here there are several, some being of a very large size; and for the most part, as they sit on some dead branch overhanging a stream, their colours are vivid in the extreme.

As for humming-birds, they fit about from blossom to blossom like so many living gems flashing in the sunlight that darts through the thick foliage of the forest.

It would be tedious to tell of all the brilliant birds that are encountered, from the various families of parrots up to the gorgeous pheasants, of which the Argus, with the enormous feathers of its wings full of peacock-like eyes, is one of the most magnificent.

I found the Dyaks very well disposed towards me as a traveller, and each willing to give me his aid in any of my natural history excursions; for at one time I was busy collecting butterflies, of which some of the specimens here are magnificent; at another time, beetles would be the object of my search; while another day, gun in hand, I wandered about through the forests in search of birds of brilliant plumage.

These latter I had got to be pretty able at skinning and preserving, well anointing their fleshy sides with arsenical soap to keep off the ravages of insects, which out there make very short work of everything that suits their palate. Every day my case grew more full of the light, gorgeously tinted skins, fragrant with the spices sprinkled in with a liberal hand to keep off pests.

I had a clever young Dyak for companion, and he was so interested in matters connected with natural history that he was never tired.

Now he would be climbing a huge tree to fetch

down some wonderful orchid, with peachy pink flowers; or to reach the bird I had shot, and which did not fall, from the thickness of the branches.

Another time he would be dashing through the bamboos in chase of some lizard glistening in its scale armour, while he was ever at hand to warn me of danger when we got into its company.

For constant rambling in these untrodden forests is not to be carried on without risk.

For instance, there exists in the great marshy parts of the forest the great python—the huge serpent of the boa constrictor kind, several specimens of which we encountered, though I never saw there the monsters of which I had heard.

Tiger cats abounded, vicious fierce beasts that, after shooting, one was always glad to see expire. Then here and there one would come upon the ourang-outang, the great ape of which so many travellers' stories have been told. It may be possible for them to have attained the height of six or seven feet, but the specimens I saw did not exceed five, though in bulk they were quite as big as a man. Their legs were, however, excessively short and strong.

The Dyak warriors were particularly strong, well-made men, heavier in build than the general run of Malays, and in appearance I thought them perfect types of manly savages. Their costume was generally a girdle, with a piece of matting hanging in front and rear.

Their arms were a long, square shield, slightly carved, a short spear, and the inevitable Malay kreeese, in its wooden sheath, a weapon made of a soft kind of iron, to which, however, they give a very keen edge, and, it is said, anoint the point with a poisonous gum.

In some parts of the island I found them capital horsemen, and very much addicted to the chase. It was a very exciting scene to see their bronzed figures, mounted on capital horses, careering along at full speed. They would be nearly nude, but invariably wore a cotton handkerchief or piece of muslin, tied turban-fashion over their heads; and a more daring race of horsemen I never saw.

Their horses would be well bridled, and, in addition, generally a kind of collar, a mere rope of twisted hide, was passed round their neck for a purpose to be described.

Saddles seemed to be unheard of, for the Dyaks rode the bare-backed steeds, clinging on as if part of the horse.

The favourite object of their pursuit was a very beautiful, little kind of deer, swift of foot, and in places tolerably plentiful.

Their way of capturing these animals was by means of the lasso, a short rope with a running noose being attached to the collar on the horse's neck already described.

In addition, every man carried a light, strong bamboo pole, about eight or nine feet long, fitted at the end with a fork. In this fork the rope was held, so that the noose hung from it ready for action; and thus accousted, they rode on till they came in sight of one of the numerous small herds of deer, when the object sought was to cut off one of the deer and ride beside it—the horse, from long train-

ing, quite seeming to enter into the sport—and then, by a clever manipulation of the long-forked bamboo, the noose was held out and dexterously managed till it was placed over the neck of the deer, the fork withdrawn, the rope attached to the horse's neck checked by reining in when the noose tightened, and the unfortunate deer thrown struggling and strangled upon the ground.

I was perfectly astonished at the address exhibited by some of these Dyaks in the management of the noose, which they swung about from the end of the bamboo, and held at times so that the deer literally leaped into it; and this, be it borne in mind, with the horse going at full speed, perhaps leaping over the dead trunk of some fallen monarch of the forest. For roads were scarce then, the best being merely great trees laid down end to end in the crocodile-infected marshes near the river-side.

I shot a good many very beautiful squirrels, and hardly ever spent a day without discovering something new in natural history.

One of the most curious reptiles I found was a kind of tree frog, of a brilliant yellow and green. The peculiar part of the creature was the way in which its feet were webbed, duck-fashion, with a thin, transparent membrane; and its toes were so elongated, that when they were spread out, each webbed foot showed a space nearly as large as the reptile's whole body. When it took its leaps from branch to bough, these webbed feet formed veritable wings, by whose means the frog skimmed through the air, somewhat like a flying squirrel. The little creature was very beautiful, and did not confine itself to flitting from branch to branch, but descended into the clear, still water beneath the overhanging boughs, where it swam with ease. So strange a combination of means of progression—namely, leaping, flying, and swimming—is not often seen in the same animal; and had I not secured the little curiosity, I should have looked upon it as a traveller's tale.

There are some very beautiful varieties of the tree frog at the present time in the Zoological Gardens, but the wing-footed frog is at present absent, it being no easy task to carry specimens alive many thousand miles.

The islands of the Malay archipelago are not very well known to travellers, and my stay there was only sufficiently long to show me that there were thousands more wonderful things to discover than those I saw.

LORD PALMERSTON once said, speaking of the Turks, "What energy can be expected of a people with no heels to their shoes?"

IN THE COUNTRY.—A beautiful young lady was walking arm-in-arm with a young man one evening, into whose eyes she would sweetly smile. "It's a lovely evening," said the fair one. "Yes," replied her companion. They were silent and walked on. "It was a lovely evening yesterday," said the beautiful girl as they came round again. "Yes," meekly answered the young man, evidently at a loss what to say. They came round a third time, and it was his turn now. "I hope it will be a lovely evening to-morrow," said he. "So do I," said she.

Aunt Dolly's Ditty.

DID I ever see a ghost? I don't know just what you mean by a ghost, Miss Bessy; but if you mean the appearance of a person after I had seen him die with my own eyes, and laid him out with my own hands—

I don't exactly know about telling you the story. You see, it's a true story, and a very solemn one, and I shouldn't like to have it laughed at, or to have any one tell me I didn't see what I did see. But you were always a pretty-behaved young lady, and you know I can't refuse you anything; so if you will sit down quiet, and take your work, I'll tell you all about it, my dear.

You know, honey, I'm a very old woman, and when I was young I was a slave to old Judge Cleaveland, over on the Flats. There were slaves in York State then. I was born down in Maryland, but the Judge moved up to these parts when I was very small, and brought his servants with him. We were well enough treated. Judge Cleaveland was a hard, high-tempered man, and used to have awful ugly fits sometimes; but like most folks of that kind, he could keep his temper well enough when it suited him, and he knew it was easy enough for his servants to run away if they didn't like their treatment. When I was eighteen I married Zack Davis, the coachman, and after that we lived mostly in a house of our own. We were free by that time, and we bought a nice little log-house, and some land for a garden, but we worked up at the house all the same.

The old Judge was a widower when he moved up here, but very soon he married a pretty young lady from the Mohawk Valley. She was only eighteen, and a sweet child as ever I saw. The Judge meant to be good to her, I guess, but she never seemed very happy. When the second little girl was born the Judge was dreadfully disappointed. I suppose he wanted a son, to inherit his great estate and keep up the family name. He never was the same to his wife after that. He was polite to her, especially before company, but he had a kind of cold, sneering way with her that I could see cut her to the heart. Her health failed, and she went home to her father's house for a change, and there she died. The Judge seemed a good deal cast down by her death—more than I should have expected. I dare say some things came back to him when it was too late. After the funeral he shut up the house and went abroad. He was in foreign parts or down in New York for ten years and more. The young ladies, Miss Anna and Miss Georgine, stayed with their grandma some years, and then they were put to school in New York. All that time Zack and I lived in the old house, to take care of it. It was lonesome' enough sometimes, especially in winter; but though I used to go all over the great rooms alone by day and night, I never saw anything then—not a thing.

Well, when the young ladies were sixteen or seventeen, the Judge wrote and told me to clean up the rooms, and have everything ready, for he was coming home. His wild land was growing very valuable, and there was no one to see to it properly; and for that and other reasons he had decided to come home to the Flats to live. So at the time set they came,

with loads of new furniture and carpets and what not, and a very nice widow lady for housekeeper. She had a son, an officer in the army, and a very fine man, who would willingly have supported her, but she preferred to do for herself.

I expected to see Miss Anna the favourite, as she was the elder, and Miss Georgine had so disappointed her pa by not being a boy; but I soon found out it was the other way. Miss Anna was not pretty. She looked like her ma, and had just such a quiet, gentle way with her. She was afraid of her father, too, as her mother had been, and with some reason—and she was afraid of her sister. She didn't care much for company, but liked best to sit down and sew or read. Miss Georgine was like her father, and had just his free, bold way. She wasn't afraid of anything at all, except that she should not be first in everything. She was very handsome, with regular features, and beautiful wavy black hair, and long curled eyelashes. I don't know that I ever saw a handsomer girl, but for real goodness and truth she was no more to be compared to Miss Anna than a great red woodpecker is to a little sweet blue-bird. She always contrived to get the best of everything, and if she got into any trouble or mischief, she generally made her father believe it was Miss Anna's fault. She made a great show of openness and saying what she thought, but she didn't think all she said, by a great deal.

When Miss Anna was about eighteen, Mrs. Gracie's son came to visit his mother, and a very fine, sober, nice young man he was. Every one liked him, especially the Judge, who could not make enough of him, till he found that the captain and Miss Anna were taking to each other; then he began to cool off. Captain Gracie stayed at the tavern in the village, and called 'most every day to see his mother, and before he left he asked the Judge for Miss Anna. Then there was a time. The Judge went into one of his furious rages, ordered both mother and son out of the house, and shut Miss Anna up in her room. Miss Georgine was as bad as her father, and the way they treated that poor girl was shameful. But Miss Anna had got her courage up, and she contrived—I never knew how—to send word to Captain Gracie. A few days after, when the Judge was out about his land, Captain Gracie drove up to the door, and asked for Miss Anna. She must have expected him, for she came down in her travelling-dress, and with her bag in her hand. Miss Georgine stormed and scolded, and sent all ways for her father; but nobody could find him, and in fact I don't think anybody tried. Miss Anna bade her sister a kind farewell, and got into the carriage, and that was the last we saw of her for many a year. They were married that same day in the city, and went away wherever his regiment was. Captain Gracie sent her father his address and a copy of his marriage lines, but the Judge never took any notice; only he handed me the paper, and told me to pack up her clothes and things and send them to her. I don't approve of runaway matches as a general thing; but I can't say I blamed Miss Anna one bit.

About this time Judge Cleaveland found out that he needed a clerk, or secretary as he called it; so he sent for Mr. Bogardus, a cousin of his wife's, to come and live in his house, and attend to his business. Mr. Bogardus was a fine, handsome man, about



thirty, very grave and sober ; but with beautiful manners—a real fine gentleman. The Judge made much of him in his pompous, condescending way. Miss Georgine began by being very cold and scornful, but she soon changed her tone when she found her cousin did not take any particular notice of it or of her, and began to be very polite to him. He had a fine voice, and played beautifully on the violin ; and she used to ask him to sing and play with her, especially when they had company ; but he almost always excused himself, and would often stay in the library till midnight, writing or reading. He seemed like a smart man, and yet he never accomplished anything for himself. He was one of the unlucky ones, poor fellow.

But the more Mr. Bogardus kept out of Miss Georgine's way, the more she courted him. That was her fashion. If there were ten men in the room, and she had nine of them around her, she didn't care anything about it till she got the tenth. She always had plenty of sweethearts, being such a beauty and a great heiress besides. Mr. Bogardus resisted a good while, but by and by I saw a change. He began to be more attentive to his cousin—to sing with her, and sometimes to go out riding and walking with her. Miss Georgine was altered too. I never saw her so gentle and so—"lovable"? Yes, that's just the word, my dear!—as she was that summer ; and I thinks to myself, "My beauty, you're caught at last ; but I wonder what your father will say." For you see he looked on Mr. Bogardus only as a kind of upper servant, for all he was Mrs. Cleaveland's own cousin.

The Judge didn't seem to notice for a while ; but by and by I think he got his eyes open. He went down to New York for a week or two ; and when he came back, he called Mr. Bogardus, and told him he had found him a fine position with a gentleman who was going out to Brazil to set up some kind of manufactures—a place of great trust, and where he would make a fortune in no time. Mr. Bogardus was much pleased. He was always ready to take up any new notion, and he thought he should make himself rich directly. But Miss Georgine had a bad headache that day, and she wasn't well for a week afterwards.

The very day Mr. Bogardus left, I was sitting in my own door ; and as I looked up I saw Miss Georgine walking across the field towards my house. I was rather surprised, for she wasn't fond of walking, and almost always rode her pony wherever she wanted to go. She walked in a weary kind of way, too ; and when she came near, I saw she looked very pale. I got out the rocking-chair for her, and made much of her ; but she sat down on a little stool, and put her beautiful head in my lap, as her poor mother had done many a time ; and says she, bursting out crying :

"Oh, Aunt Dolly, my husband's gone!"

Honey, you might have knocked me down with a feather. I couldn't think what she meant at first, and thought she had got light-headed from being out in the sun.

"Child!" says I, "you don't know what you are saying!"

"Yes, I do—too well!" says she.

And then she told me between her sobs that she and Mr. Bogardus had been privately married while her father was away, the day that they went down to the

city together, and that they meant to keep it quiet till Mr. Bogardus made his fortune.

"I never meant to tell anybody," says she ; "but, Aunt Dolly, I couldn't bear it all alone, and I knew I could trust you."

Well, I could have wished she had chosen some one else, but I tried to comfort her as well as I could. Presently I said—

"Ah, child, you can feel for your poor sister now."

"That was very different," says she, lifting up her head as proud as could be ; "I haven't disgraced myself as Anna did. My husband is a gentleman—not a servant's son."

When she said that, Miss Bessy, I knew she had more yet to suffer.

Says I—

"Miss Georgine, I shall never betray you, you may be sure, but you ought to tell your pa. Suppose he finds it out ; what will he say, and what will you do?"

"He won't find it out," says she ; "and if he does, I shall know what to do."

But then she put her head down in my lap again, and oh, how she did cry ! I couldn't but pity her, though she showed such a wrong spirit ; and I tried to tell her of a better comfort than mine, but she wouldn't hear a word of that. She didn't want any cant, she said. By and by I made her some tea, and coaxed her to drink it and to eat a little, and when the sun got low I walked home with her. She was always gentler with me after that, and whenever she got a letter from Mr. Bogardus, she would come and tell me about it. I was on thorns for a while, and watched her as a cat watches a mouse ; but everything went on as usual, and nobody but our two selves knew or mistrusted anything about the matter.

Miss Georgine got her letters pretty regular for about six months, and then they stopped, and she never had another. At first she pined a good deal, and I was afraid she was going into a decline ; but presently I saw a change. Her old proud self came back, only harder and colder than before. She was handsomer than ever, and more fond of company and admiration. One day I ventured to ask her if she had heard any more of Mr. Bogardus.

Oh, how her eyes flashed as she said—

"Never mention that man's name to me again ! He has shamed and deserted me!" says she.

"You don't know that," says I ; "he may be dead."

"He isn't dead!" she answered. "My father heard he was married to a rich Spanish widow up at the mines."

"I don't believe it!" says I, boldly. "It isn't a bit like him."

For you see I had come to know him pretty well. I had nursed him in his sick turns, of which he had a good many ; and though I didn't approve of the secret marriage, I liked him, and felt like standing up for him.

"Never mention his name to me again, Dolly!" says she.

And I didn't for a long time, till the day came that I had to do it.

Well, the time went on, year after year, in much the same way. Our folks spent the summers on their own estate, and the winters in New York or at the

south with the Judge's family, spending a deal of money, and seeing a deal of fine company. It was nine years that very spring since Mr. Bogardus went away, when, after they had been home a couple of days, Miss Georgine rode over to see me. She brought me a fine gown, and some other things from New York, and after she had showed them to me, says she, speaking proud and careless-like—

"Aunt Dolly, I want you to come up to the house next week, to make my wedding cake and keep house a while, because I am going to be married."

Miss Bessy, I couldn't believe my ears; and says I—

"Miss Georgine, I don't know as I quite understand you."

"You are growing stupid, Dolly!" says she, pettishly. "I'm going to be married to Mr. Philip Livingstone, and I want you to make the cake."

I don't know what made me, but I spoke right out.

"Mrs. Bogardus," says I, "have you told your pa and Mr. Livingstone about your first marriage?"

"How dare you call me by that name?" says she, and her eyes fairly blazed. "No, I have not told them, and I shall not. You can, if you choose," says she. "How much do you mean to ask me as the price of keeping the secret I was fool enough to tell you?"

Then I flared up.

"Mrs. Bogardus," said I, "there's the door. Please walk out of it, and don't come insulting a woman in her own house that thinks as much of herself as you do, if she is black! If that's what you think of me, you may get some one else to make your cake," says I.

Well, she saw she had gone too far. Like her father, she could command her temper well enough when she chose, and she knew she couldn't get any one to make such cake as mine, if she went down on her knees to them. Besides, I knew all the ways of the house, and they couldn't do without me. So she came down, and said she was sorry, and she did not mean anything, and so on, till she coaxed me round, and I promised to do all she wanted.

"But if it was the last word I ever spoke, I do say you ought to tell Mr. Livingstone," says I. "What if Mr. Bogardus should come back some day?"

I knew I was doing right, but I felt sorry for her when I saw how pale she turned.

"That unhappy man is dead long ago," says she; "and if he were not, it is nearly nine years since I heard from him, and that is enough to release me. But you'll be glad to hear," says she, "that I have coaxed my father to write to sister Anna, and ask her and her son to the wedding. You know she is a widow now, and there is no use in keeping up the quarrel any longer."

So then I agreed to make the cake, and keep house for her father while she was away. They were coming back to spend the summer at home. But I didn't feel happy. I knew she was doing wrong, and that harm would come of it.

The wedding went off nicely. Mr. Livingstone was a fine, handsome man, a good deal older than Miss Georgine. He looked good and sensible, and it was easy to see that he fairly worshipped his wife. My heart ached for both of them, because I knew as things were they never could be happy. You see, I felt sure Mr. Bogardus wasn't dead.

How did I feel sure? Well, it was just like this.

Whenever any of my folks had died away from me, I had always seen them in my dreams that same night. I saw my own brother, who was drowned in the lake, and my aunt with her baby, and Miss Georgine's mother. Now, Mr. Bogardus was fond of me. He said once that I was more like a mother than any one had ever been to him, and I knew he wouldn't die without coming to let me know.

Miss Anna that was and her boy were at the wedding, and stayed a fortnight after. She wore her deep widow's weeds, and looked thin and worn; but she had a sweet, placid, happy look, worth more than all her sister's beauty. She told me that through all her trials, in sickness and loneliness, and losing her husband and her children, she had never regretted her marriage, not one minute.

The boy was a fine, manly fellow, the image of his father. The Judge took to him greatly, and wanted Mrs. Gracie to come home to live; but she excused herself, and said she must take care of her husband's mother, who was feeble and needed her. She told me privately that she didn't think such a life would be good for her boy, and I dare say she was right.

The bride and bridegroom came home after a month, and settled down with us for the summer; and the day she came home I noticed a scared look in Miss Georgine's face that I never saw there before.

That night I was sitting in my own house (and glad enough I was to get back to it), when some one knocked softly at the door. Zack opened it, and the minute he did so, he cried out—

"Lord 'a' mercy!"

I jumped up, and then I thought surely I saw a ghost; but I didn't. It was Mr. Bogardus himself, but, oh, how thin and pale, and with his beautiful hair white as snow!

"Will you take me in, Dolly?" says he. "I am sick to death, old friend, and I have come to die with you."

In a minute all the consequences rushed on my mind, but I couldn't help that. We took him, and put him to bed in our best room, and as soon as the light fell on his face, I saw it was marked for death. I sat up with him all night. He didn't sleep much, and seemed to want to talk; and I knew it could not make much difference, so I let him have his way. He told me he had written home by every mail for more than a year after he stopped getting any letters in return. From all I could make out, he had gone on just in his old way, trying first one thing and then another, always thinking he was just going to make a great fortune.

"But I never was unfaithful to Georgine, not for one moment," said he. "I always loved her, and I never distrusted her. When my health failed, and I knew I must die, I felt I must see Georgine once more. I landed in New York, and there I heard she was married, and saw her walking with her husband."

And then he begged me to ask Miss Georgine to come and see him, if only for a moment, before he died.

"I will never betray her," said he. "No one will think it strange that she should come to see me. But oh, mammy"—he used to call me mammy—"I can't leave the world till I see her once more."

The next morning, at breakfast-time, I went up to the house, and told the Judge and Miss Georgine that Mr. Bogardus was at my house; that he hadn't many hours to live, and would take it kind if they would come and see him.

"Poor young man, is he so low?" says the Judge. "He should have come to us; but he was always fond of you, Dolly. I will certainly come over, and you must take anything he needs from the house." And then he turns to his daughter, and says, "You will go to see your poor cousin, Georgine?"

"Why, no, I think not," says she, pouring out her coffee as unconcerned as could be. "I never took any special interest in your clerk, papa, and I am not fond of doleful scenes. I don't think I could endure to be in the house with a dying person."

I saw Mr. Livingstone look at her as she said these last words, and he answered her, very gravely—

"Some time, Georgine, you will have to be in the room with a dying person."

"Time enough when it comes," said she, lightly. "Of course I am sorry for the poor man, but it is quite out of the question that I should go to see him. He is nothing to me."

I wasn't going to be put off like that. I followed her to her room, and says I to her—

"Mrs. Livingstone, what answer am I to carry to that dying man?"

"Tell him I will not see him," said she, speaking hard and slow. "He is nothing to me, nor I to him."

"Won't you send him your forgiveness?" I asked her.

"No!" she cried, passionately. "I will never forgive him—never. Tell him that if you like."

"Mrs. Livingstone," said I, "you will bring down the judgment of Heaven on your head."

And with that I left her. I wasn't afraid of her, whoever else was.

It was hard to go back to Mr. Bogardus with such a message, but he would have me tell him her very words. He groaned, and was silent for a few minutes, and then says he—

"Dolly, tell her she shall see me, alive or dead!"

And then he fainted, and I had hard work to bring him to. Later in the day Judge Cleaveland and Mr. Livingstone came down. Mr. Bogardus didn't say much to them, only thanked the Judge for his goodness to him, and begged forgiveness if he had ever injured him. The Judge said everything that was kind—he was a good deal softened in those days. Then Mr. Livingstone asked Mr. Bogardus if he should read and pray with him, and Mr. Bogardus said yes. So Mr. Livingstone read a chapter, and made a beautiful prayer. He was a very religious man in his quiet way, which made it the more strange that he should be taken with Miss Georgine. When he got up from his knees, Mr. Bogardus stretched out his hand to him.

"Thank you, Livingstone; you have done me good," said he, squeezing his hand hard. "I want to tell you that there is no bitterness in my heart towards any human being. It is all washed away. God bless you!"

Honey, it did me good to hear him speak in that way to the man who was, as you might say, standing

in his shoes. The minute they were gone, Mr. Bogardus fainted once more. I thought he would never breathe again; but he did, and seemed to brighten up a good deal. Zack thought he was better, but I didn't. I had seen too many people die not to know the lighting up for death. About midnight, when we were both sitting by him, he asked to be raised up, and have his head laid on my breast, and then he asked Zack to get him some fresh water from the spring. When we were alone together, he looked up in my face, and says he—

"Mammy, tell Georgine that I have never been unfaithful to her, and I shall be faithful still. She must see me, alive or dead."

Says I—

"Oh, Mr. Bogardus, my dear boy, you mustn't bear malice now."

"I don't," said he. "I told Livingstone true when I said that all bitterness was washed away. But it is borne in on my mind, that for her own sake, alive or dead, Georgine must see me, and you must tell her so. Will you?"

"I will," says I.

I never mistrusted that he meant anything but that she should come and look at him after he was dead.

"That's all," said he. "Kiss me, mammy. You've been more like a mother to me than any woman was before, and you won't lose by it, I know."

Then I kissed him, and he just laid his head on my breast, and with one sigh he was gone.

Never mind me, Miss Bessy, honey. You see, I loved him dearly, with all his faults, and dying on my breast and all.

We laid him out, Zack and I; and though I've done the same for many a one, I never saw a sweeter smile on the face of man, woman, or child than rested on his. As soon as it was time in the morning, I went up to the house, and told them as they sat at breakfast.

"So he is gone, poor soul," says the Judge, wiping his eyes. "Take no trouble about the funeral, Dolly; I will arrange it all. Georgine, can you find some mourning for Dolly? I dare say she will like to wear it."

"I should be much obliged if you would, Mrs. Livingstone," says I.

She told me to come to her room, and she would see. So I went up after breakfast, and she pulled out a couple of nice black dresses, and a black bonnet and crape veil, which she had worn a year before in mourning for her grandma.

"There, you may have those," said she, in a careless, contemptuous way, "though I don't see why you should wear mourning. But I suppose you think it's genteel."

She always riled me when she spoke in that way, but I kept myself down; and after I had thanked her for the things, I told her Mr. Bogardus's message. She winced a little, in spite of herself, and the scared look came into her eyes again; but it was gone in a minute, and she said, coldly—

"Dolly, there has been enough of this. If you mention that person's name to me again, we shall quarrel."

I had no call to mention it again, for I had cleared

my conscience, and that was enough. Mr. Bogardus was buried next day from the church, the weather being warm, and our house small. Mr. Livingstone sent the carriage for Zack and me; and Zack and Mr. Livingstone, and some gentlemen from the village, were the bearers. It was quite a large funeral, and the coffin and everything was as nice as one could wish to see.

The next morning Judge Cleaveland and Mr. Livingstone went down to the city to some convention, expecting to be gone a week. That very day the cook they had brought from New York took offence at something, and she and the other woman packed up and went over to the village, leaving Miss Georgine alone. So she went down to ask if Zack and I would come up and stay, because she was expecting company; so we went, of course. I found everything at sixteen and sevens—no cake in the house worth looking at, all the summer fruit spoiling to be done up, and so on. I sent for my niece Carline to come and help, and we soon got things in order.

The second night, I sent Zack and Carline off to bed, and sat up till late, attending to some plum cake I had in the great oven. It was a fancy of mine, when I had a special baking, to do it late in the evening, when I had the kitchen to myself. Well, I got my cake done to my liking—I little knew what kind of party I was baking for—and then I thought I would take a look through the house, and see that all was right, as I used to do when I lived there before.

The house was an odd one in its shape. A long, wide hall ran through the front part. When it got to the back it turned in an L, as they say now, and went on to a side door, and in this side hall were the stairs. At the top of them was Miss Georgine's own room, and at the foot a door leading by a passage to the kitchen. Halfway from this door to the front was the library door, with a narrow glass window over it.

I had opened the passage door, and had just turned down the lamp that had always burned at the foot of the stairs, when I saw that there was a light in the library. Thinks I, "What in the world is Miss Georgine doing in the library at this time of night?" Before I could move, I heard some one's hand on the lock, and stood still to see who it should be.

Miss Bessy, as sure as you sit there, I saw the appearance of Mr. Bogardus, just as he used to look when he was a young man, and worked in that library for Judge Cleaveland. I wasn't scared that I know of, but I couldn't move. He came straight towards me, but didn't look at me; and, passing as close to me as I am to you, he walked rather slowly up the stairs to Miss Georgine's room. When he reached it, he turned and looked at me, holding up his hand in a warning kind of way, and then he opened the door and went in.

I couldn't go upstairs—something held me back. I sat down on the bottom stair, and listened a long time, but I didn't hear a sound; and by and by I crept away to bed, my teeth chattering as if I had an ague fit.

The next morning I was in the dining-room when Miss Georgine came down. Child, I shouldn't have known her! She was grey as ashes, only with a

purple spot in each cheek, and her face was all drawn and sunken. She looked thirty years older than when she went to bed.

Says I—

"Mrs. Livingstone, are you sick?"

"I have a headache, but the air will drive it off," says she, proud to the last. "I think, Dolly, that as our friends have written to put off their visit, I will go down to the city to Mr. Livingstone. I need a little change, and I suppose you won't mind staying here a few days, with Carline for company?" says she. "You won't be afraid without your husband, will you?"

Well, I was—a little—after what I had seen, there is no denying it; but I felt that somehow she ought to be with her husband, so I said—

"Oh, no, I wasn't afraid; I had Carline for company, and the gardener could sleep in the house."

I helped Miss Georgine put up her things, and dressed her. She was quiet and gentle-like for her; but when I said—

"Mrs. Livingstone, I'm afraid you ain't well enough for such a long ride all by yourself," she just laughed that hard laugh I so hated to hear.

"You're nervous yourself, Dolly," says she. "I have only a headache; but you know that always makes me look ghastly. It will all be gone in an hour."

I didn't say any more, but I knew better. On the steps she turned to me, and held out her hand.

"Good-bye, Dolly," said she. "You've always been good to me, and I'm afraid I have sometimes been so cross to you, but don't remember it against me."

Child, I was always glad she said that. I watched the carriage away, and then I went back to her room, and put it all in nice order with my own hands. I felt full of anxiety, and I kept myself as busy as I could. Zack didn't come back the next day, nor the next; but the morning of the fourth day, Carline looked out the window when she got up, and says she—

"Aunt Dolly, Uncle Zack's coming on horseback as hard as he can drive. Something must have happened!"

Something had happened, sure enough. Zack had been riding ever since midnight, and he could hardly speak, he was so tired; but at last he got it out. Miss Georgine had died in a fit the night before, and the body was to be brought home that day.

"What time did she die?" I asked, presently.

"It was just half-past eleven when she took the first fit," said he; "and she died at the same hour last night."

Then I knew.

Well, they brought her home in her coffin, and laid her in the front parlour; and when all was done, I went to the Judge, and told him I was going to watch myself, and nobody else would be needed. You see, I didn't know what might happen, and I didn't want stories going all over the country. I told Zack he might take a blanket, and lie down on the sofa in the back parlour, and I would sit up.

About half-past eleven, I went into the room where the corpse lay. I had half a mind to call Zack to go with me; but I knew how tired he was, and I let him sleep. There was a shaded lamp in the room, and I had a candle in my hand that I set down on a table

near by, and stood a few minutes looking at her. She wasn't a pleasant corpse to look at. Those same purple spots on her cheeks, and a dark frown on her forehead; but the worst was that her eyes wouldn't stay shut. I had tried every way to close them, and the doctor had tried, but they wouldn't stay shut.

I turned away, and went to the window, when something, I don't know what, made me look round. Then I saw him for the second time—saw Mr. Bogardus looking into his wife's coffin, with just the same sad, sweet smile that was on his face when he bade me good-bye. As I stood looking—for I had no power to move—the appearance stooped down, and seemed to kiss the corpse, and then it vanished away, and I saw it no more.

I was like one turned to stone for a few minutes. When I came to myself, Miss Bessy, there was a change. Her eyes were shut—closed as naturally as a sleeping babe's, with the long curled lashes resting on her cheeks. The ugly purple spots had faded away; the face was like fine marble, and the pale lips had a meek, peaceful look, such as I had never seen them wear since the days that she and Mr. Bogardus were lovers.

That's all the story. Poor Miss Georgine was buried next day, alongside the only man she ever really loved. I can't but hope it was well with both of them—poor unlucky children! The doctor, he talked learnedly about contraction of muscles and what not; but doctors don't know everything, and he hadn't seen what I had. My own opinion is that she wasn't free to go till it was made up, and that they made it up then.

A Tiger at Home.

A MORE difficult, a more utterly heart-breaking country to shoot over than parts of North-Western India could not be conceived. The work must of course be done on foot, for the hillsides are all steep and often precipitous, and every now and anon a rugged and boulder-strewn watercourse down the mountain-side has to be negotiated. Elephants are therefore useless.

In some rather infrequent spots, it is true, the suddenly widened torrent-bed has mayhap left an island or cliff-bound bay of splendid tiger grass, with patches of the broad green, flag-like patér interspersed, having here and there in its midst a tree or two or a shady thicket, and ending in a bit of heavy nal, or reedy swamp.

The sportsman's first sight of such a spot, as he suddenly spies it nestling quiet below the hill spur which he has just rounded, warily on the look-out for a sāmbar or chital, fills his eyes and his heart with longing, and tightens his grip on his darling rifle; for there he knows is the likely midday lair of the royal tiger, or the nursery of his lady and her cubs.

But, alas! it cannot be beaten without elephants; it is too far off to be stoned or shelled with hand grenades from any coign of vantage; and it would be impossible to beat it on foot with his two or three trusty hill hunters, even if it would not be sheer madness to try such a thing. To very many of such

"bits" it would be utterly impossible to fetch elephants and all the somewhat cumbrous paraphernalia of shikar.

Such, then, was the country lying above the Dhāra Mandi, over which a man-eating tiger had established his unpleasant sway.

The advance of cultivation in the plains below, by bringing human life nearer to the foot of the hills and circumscribing the favourite haunts of the *fera naturæ*, has driven back much of the larger game, and has consequently crowded such a country with tigers, panthers, bears, chital or spotted deer; and the more secluded dells are seldom without a few wild elephants at any time of the year.

Men out cutting the rope-making grasses which cover the lower spurs of the Himalayas, bamboo-fellers, and those whose trade lay in bringing out dry firewood—now and then one singled out by Kismet from a number going in Indian file along a hill "battia or foot-track, and occasionally even an old woman out fetching water—began to be carried off with increasing frequency.

The depredations of this tiger became so serious, and the terror which he had established so powerful and widespread, that the mandi began to be deserted. Men could with difficulty be got to go for bamboos or timber, and then in numbers and with great precautions; the tracks and pathways were given over to the beasts of the field; and the land groaned because of the tyranny of this particular one.

Government thought it worth while to bestir itself, and magnanimously offered one hundred rupees, or ten pounds, to any one who would take his life in his hand, and rid this tract of country of a wily and dangerous brute, who was feasting on men and women who went their ways and did their business therein.

No one was tempted.

In February, 1872, I was encamped in the plains, when I heard that the man-eater had killed an adventurous dhobi, or washerman, who had presumed to lay aside his hereditary trade and go cutting rope grass on the hills. I started next morning, with three elephants and a light kit; and after a day's hard toil, taking elephants and a howdah over ground such as seldom, if ever, had been travelled by the like before, got to the spot late in the day, but in time to find the fresh tracks of, no doubt, the man-eater. Alas! they were only too eloquent of the fact that, having digested the dhobi, King Stripes had just shifted quarters. I found that the brute had killed, or at any rate had seized, the man on a low, grass-covered hill, and had thence carried him in his mouth diagonally up the face of the mountain to its summit, had then gone along a narrow rocky ridge which crowned it, and had made his meal on a small turf plateau which commanded all around. The tiger's course with his unfortunate prey—killed, let us hope, by the first crushing spring or blow—was easily followed through the down-trodden and blood-stained grass. The dhobi's legs below the knee were left—natives' legs do not look as if there would be much to eat on them—and were taken home by his friends for decent cremation. Of his destroyer I saw nothing but the traces; he had "made tracks," and

that was all. I followed them until dark; but it was no use.

During the cold season, hardly a week passed without a report either of a human being carried off, or of men attacked by this tiger, and having been able to beat him off. In the last week in May, 1873, I was encamped on duty just under the foot of the hills. A report was brought by some men that the tiger had killed another man; and early on the 23rd of May, I went in with three elephants. Though the chance of falling in with him was, of course, one of the incitements to the expedition, I cannot say that I went to look for the man-eater, for I did not believe that such a brute would ever let himself be killed with elephants. Apart from the extreme wariness and cunning with which the brute was pretty sure to be especially armed, I expected that he would never be come across in any country practicable for elephants.

I had beaten through some miles of splendid tiger covert without result, and was crossing a portion of the plateau, when my elephant—a very staunch male—to my astonishment, proclaimed it as his opinion that there was a tiger about. I was going in line at the time through soft green grass, and did not believe my friend. Presently, however, I came upon an unmistakable lair of a very large tiger, and anon the elephant on my left spoke to another before her. Both were perfectly fresh, and it was plain enough that the pair of tigers had seen us coming across the open plain, and had slunk away to heavier covert.

The elephants had not gone two hundred yards into a swamp in front of us before they began to give tongue, and one mahawat called out that he had had a glimpse of a tiger, and that it was coming my way. I had taken up position on the extreme left of the line, on the crest of the upper terrace bank, expecting that the tiger would attempt to break back, either by slinking round the flank at the base of the bank, or by breaking up it on to firm ground and racing back. This would certainly have been the case had I not been seen. As it was, a large male tiger broke out into the open plain to the extreme right of the line; and splendidly handsome he appeared as he stood still, looking at the elephants, bathed in brilliant sunlight, and on a carpet of bright green grass. He was at least two hundred yards off, but—wrong though I knew it to be—I could not resist the shot. I missed him; and he came on full swing through the heavy grass, reared up, clawing at the chest of the elephant upon which I was mounted; and in spite of the fierce blows delivered upon its back and head by the elephant's trunk, it tried hard to reach the howdah where I and a couple of companions were seated.

The elephant squealed and trumpeted, and its movements were so erratic that it was a long time before I could get a fair shot at the tiger. At last, however, I saw the evil-looking face come round the elephant's chest; and taking a careful aim, I fired a heavy ball into its brain, and it fell dead.

I shall never forget the heat of that day. What with the Indian sun of the end of May, the utter stillness of the atmosphere, and the steamy, pestilential breath of the dense swampy growth through

which we were moving, it was awful. All my soda water burst; my water was as hot as if it had been on a fire all the time; and as for my guns and the ironwork of the howdah, to touch them was a certain blister. My hands were awfully burnt. A native swell, who was with me on another elephant, well-nigh died.

The Cuckoo's Mode of Carrying its Egg.

I BELIEVE it has already been conjectured that the cuckoo first lays her egg on the ground, then swallows it, and carries it to the nest which she has selected, and deposits it there with her beak.

Several instances are on record of her being shot with the egg in her throat, out of which it slipped when the bird was taken up and handled.

"But what hindered the egg from slipping down the bird's throat as she flew?" asked a sagacious friend to whom I mentioned the matter.

And he suggested as an answer to his own question that there must be some provision for holding the egg in the throat, of the nature of a second stomach.

On this hint I went to a bird-stuffer, and found him in the very act of opening a cuckoo, in order to stuff it. I desired him to see if there was any contrivance in the throat (which was already turned almost inside out) by which the egg might be detained.

He put his knife to the interior membrane underneath the beak, opened it, and found another membrane behind it, the two being united below. There was just what I was looking for—namely, a purse capable of holding the egg safely within the throat without its descending into the stomach.

I afterwards desired the man to make sure that this purse, thus closed below, was open above.

He first put his bradawl down the throat, and met with no stoppage; but, on a second trial, he found another passage, opening into a cavity where his instrument found further progress forbidden. This was evidently the same purse, the inner side of which had been previously opened, at a point a little above the base.

On looking down the throat, I thought I could distinguish the natural orifice of this purse, just behind the root of the tongue.

I regret that I did not have the whole membrane of the throat from the tongue downwards extracted and cleaned, in order to make quite sure of the nature, shape, and size of this receptacle.

The Egotist's Note-book.

SOME people dislike the new fashion of placing the orchestra of a theatre beneath the stage, and, certainly, there are plenty of arguments for and against the custom. Here are some in its favour. There is a growing habit amongst the musicians of forgetting their place, and, not content with freely criticising and applauding a new piece, carrying the criticism on to the appearance of the ladies in the stalls, at whom they are given to stare rather

offensively. It is written that "a cat may look at a king." True; but nothing is said about a *queen*, and, probably, if Tom stared at proverbial regal majesty, he would be kicked out. The worst instance of orchestral misbehaviour I have seen occurred the other night at the Opera Comique, where an instrumentalist, alluding to the violin-tuning that had been going on, said, in a voice that was perfectly audible in the stalls, that he "always hated the noise made by those hurdy-gurdies"—hurdy-gurdies being qualified by the familiar past participle, a contraction of the verb to condemn. The *chef d'orchestre* was not in his place: had he been there, it is to be hoped that he would have found a fresh use for his *bâton*.

The following has been received from an address in Whitechapel, concerning the Grosvenor Gallery:—"I say, guvner, fain larks and kidding a fellow, but tell us wot's this here lardy-dardy game of the swells in the new Grosvenor Gallri. Hit say as 'the dado is of a dark green brocaded velvet, the panels in the cove are blue, surrounded by a green laurel swag.' Now, who's the cove with the blue panels, and where does he keep it; likewise, how about the green laurel swag? Might do at Christmas, with holly and plenty of berries, but wilets is in now; and as to laurel—Hi say as we know's a trick worth two o' that. Laurel, ah! Not my style of swag, though they may do for a cove with blue panels.—Yours to command, WILLM SIKES."

Parliament is applied to for legislation on all sorts of subjects, but why doesn't some member bring in a bill to regulate loan offices? A poor widow applied at the Mansion House a few days since for temporary relief. She had borrowed some money from a loan office, and, as usual, her furniture had been seized and sold. The Lord Mayor directed an inquiry into her case, and it was found to be one of the greatest possible hardship. Yet the law was unable to touch the money-lender.

Lord Aberdeen has written a very sensible letter on the subject of out-door relief. Acting on the recommendation of the Charity Organization Society, the Lewisham Guardians had posted up a list of the persons in receipt of parochial relief, and much feeling had been excited in consequence. Lord Aberdeen points out that persons most in need of relief are generally the most reluctant to apply for it, whilst impostors are not likely to be deterred from cheating the ratepayers by the prospect of having their names posted up. His lordship says that private lists ought to be sufficient, and hints that an opinion largely prevails that care has not always been taken to avoid hurting the feelings of poor persons whose cases have come under the notice of the society. Bravo, Lord Aberdeen! But fancy anybody "hurting the feelings" of the poor! What right have the poor to have feelings?

The "Order of Danielites" has petitioned the House of Commons for a new Polar expedition, "manned" by persons who do not use flesh food, alcohol, or tobacco. The Danielites are pledged to

abstain from tobacco, alcohol, flesh, fish, and fowl. Just the sort of people to subsist at the Pole, if they could only hold out long enough to get there.

Mr. Bridge, the Hammersmith magistrate, doesn't look favourably on lady-helps. An intoxicated "lady-help parlour-maid" was brought before him, and, as soon as he ascertained her calling, he promptly fined her ten shillings, or just double the usual penalty. Possibly Mr. Bridge thinks that genteel parlour-maids ought to pay for their gentility.

Messrs. Pigou and Co., the great gunpowder manufacturers, of Dartford, say:—"One of our correspondents in Greece called upon us a few days back and informed us that gunpowder, with labels attached, on each of which is printed 'manufactured by Messrs. Bigou and Co., of Bartford Mills,' is being extensively sold in that country, and that the powder itself (which has been shipped from Trieste, and is, of course, not our manufacture) is of a most inferior description." Why do not Messrs. Pigou behave like gunpowder makers, and blow the vendors up?

ELEPHANTS IN MALAY.—There are immense numbers on the peninsula, but I am not aware that the Malays ever capture them for domestic use. I have heard it said that the Malayan elephant will not live in captivity; but I do not think it can be true. At any rate, they live wild in such numbers that I doubt if there is any part of the world, Central Africa not excepted, which can show, mile for mile, so many elephants as the Malay peninsula. The forest is everywhere cut up with their footmarks, and it is quite possible to meet half a dozen different herds in a single day's hunting. This abundance of the animal I attribute to the evergreen nature of the Malayan forest, on which the rain falls almost daily, providing the elephant with a never-failing supply of leaves and fruit. But if herds are numerous, tuskers are few. The Malays are very expert and patient in killing those animals whose ivory is of any value, and the result is that the European sportsman has but a poor chance of bagging a big tusker, though he may shoot females and tuskless males *ad nan-seam*. It is said that some of the Malay sultans have great stores of ivory, which they will not or cannot trade; and it is likely enough that this is really the case, considering the great numbers of elephants which have ranged these pathless wilds.

THE morality of the business world may be considered at a very low ebb, when almost directly a new article has been introduced, and is by universal consent considered a success, worthless imitations of it appear. These imitators trade upon the reputation gained by the original invention, and if not narrowly watched bring it into bad repute. Imitations are in existence of the "New Patent Stocking Suspender," the only safeguard being the name of Almond stamped on every clasp and on the band. Every lady desiring health and comfort should provide herself with a pair of these useful articles, which may be obtained of Mr. H. J. Almond, 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, E.C. Ladies' size, post free, 3s. 2d. per pair. Size of waist required.

A Leaf of Gold.

CHAPTER I.



GRACE LISTON is my very dear friend, and she is as good as she is beautiful. If any one is calculated to judge of Grace's virtues, it is myself; for in all the thousand and one duties that fall upon me as mistress of the parsonage (my brother Arthur is rector, and I have no mother), Grace is my right-hand counsellor and helper.

See where she sits under the rose-covered porch of

her sweet little home. Did you ever see a kindlier face or more graceful, womanly figure, and do not those white, beautifully formed hands seem expressly adapted for all loving, practical purposes?

Who can quiet the hateful crying babies, that certainly make the cottages down in our picturesque village anything but inviting to a timid visitant, like Grace? Who but her could prescribe, from such infallible grandmotherly recipes, for all the various ailments to which infant humanity is subject? Who so helpful, so comforting, so patient in a sick room, as our Madonna—so we often call her; and where could another friend be found as tender and loving in times of trial and despondency, as clever, as thoughtful as Grace, in the common every-day life, from which sooner or later we are all judged?

"What a dreadful thing it will be when you marry, Grace. I mean, what will become of us all, particularly me, when I have you no longer to scold and pet me as I deserve?"

Grace breaks in upon my half-musing speech with a bright, happy laugh. She laughed a great deal in the summer-time. The exquisite beauty of the earth, and air, and sky had an enlivening influence upon her. She used to say that the hour she spent in the garden alone, in the early morning, filled her heart with a subtle sense of beauty and merriment that lasted the whole day. And it must have been so. I never saw her without a smile on her lips, and a kind word for whoever sought her services.

I, Isabel Hope, am sitting on a low branch of the apple tree close by Grace's porch. I have been reading the "Lady of Lyons," but it is too warm to read when the interest becomes excited, so I indulge my natural laziness, and with my arms thrown back against the rough bark, to make a pillow low for my head, I give utterance to the half-formed query as to the possibility of Grace carrying her

ministrations elsewhere, in the possible event of her marrying. Grace is busy copying a tatting pattern, and very hard work it appears to me. Her fingers almost fly as they throw the shuttle to form those delicate little stars. Her head, with the large, fair rose in her brown hair, bends from time to time earnestly over the book outspread on her knee. And it is not difficult to judge, from the satisfied smile that plays round her lips after a few minutes' perusal of the intricate problems, that Grace takes actual pleasure in achievement, and could not by any possibility be happy without something to do.

There is one point of difference between Grace and myself: I must be lazy when I am very happy.

From my exalted seat, I can see the flush of the sunset quivering on the tops of the elms in our garden, and the quaint, ivied tower of the little church standing cool and grey against the blue of the sky. The ivy blooms there are so thickly studded with bees that you may hear them droning and humming quite distinctly in the pauses of the service on Sunday. I can see the very tree in the wood beyond, where the nightingale sits every evening to sing. There is the low wall, dividing the churchyard from the road—it runs up the side of the vicarage garden; and the roses that Bruce and Arthur planted many years ago, to decorate the grave of our faithful dog Hector, have clambered quite on to the top of the wall, where they now enjoy the view of lane and church and garden.

A hawthorn shades Arthur's favourite seat. He generally writes his sermons in the garden in the summer-time. Oh, the delicious, sunny summer-time, why does it not last for ever?

"Grace, do you see that lark floating like a speck on that little white cloud? Ah! now it is coming nearer. Did you ever listen to anything more perfect?"

"He learnt that song at the gates of the morning land," replied Grace, letting her hands fall idly for a moment on her lap, and watching the gradual fall of the bird to its earth nest in the adjoining field.

"Did you ever see that poem I once wrote about the song of a blackbird, Grace?"

"No, indeed, Isabel."

"Bruce liked it very well—at least, he said so. I will read it to you if you like. But look out, darling, I'm going to jump down."

I lift myself upright on the lower bough, and prepare to come down as lightly as possible into the soft, spongy grass. I turn my head to bid the sunset farewell, perhaps, and am suddenly aware that another sun, in the shape of a hatless, curly head, is crossing the home pastures, the nearest way from the hall to Grace's cottage. I watch it leap over the stile, and disappear in the deep honeysuckle lane; another moment, and it reappears at the garden hedge. Dazzled by the brightness of two suns in the landscape, my brain becomes confused, my nerves unsteady: forgetting the caution and calmness necessary to jump even a small height gracefully and successfully, in a very pardonable but unfortunate flutter of agitation, I precipitate myself to the ground.

For a moment I do not rightly know what has

happened; a sharp, indefinable pain recalls me from the momentary land of unconsciousness whither I have wandered. Grace kneels by my side, sprinkling cold water on my face; but the sun is nowhere to be seen.

"Why, what can be the matter?" I gasp, feebly.

"Nothing very dreadful, I dare say," answers Grace, smiling, although she looks paler than is her wont. "Did you fall or make a false step? How was it, love?"

"I hardly know—I think I jumped; but, anyhow, I must have come down *à la* Humpty Dumpty. I feel all right now."

"Try if you can stand," says Grace. "Be very careful at first, and lean on me."

I try and fail, with a flood of tears, for the pain is intolerable at the attempt to use one foot. Grace assures me it is only a sprained ankle, as she expected; but it seems to me that I must at least be lame for life.

"Don't cry, Isabel; come, be a brave little woman. Trust me to know it is only a sprained ankle after all, and, although very painful to bear, yet in no sense dangerous or incurable. There, you are better now; I will place this cushion under your head, and cover you with my shawl, and you'll take no harm on the dry grass until Bruce comes back."

"The kettle is boiling over," I moan in reply, "and Anna's gone to the town, and I, who was to have helped you, have made myself an extra care by my folly."

And a severe twinge of pain brings the tears again to my eyes.

"I believe it is the kettle," says Grace, laughing. "How pleasant all that spluttering is, to be sure. My imagination can even go so far as to translate it into 'Come and make tea;' and if you are quite comfortable, I will go and do so."

With a long, close kiss on my lips, and tender words of sorrow for my suffering, she floats away across the grass, and through the rosy porch, and soon there comes a musical clattering of china cups and silver spoons, and her sweet, ringing voice ever and anon calling to me, blending with odours of new-baked cakes, and golden butter, and honey fresh from the comb. I can picture it all so well, the snow-white napery, the damask roses, and high-piled dish of strawberries, without which, in the summer-time, Grace's tea table was never complete. And very pleasant it is to dwell upon so fragrant and sweet a picture.

The sunlight lingers over the lawn where I lie, no doubt to express its sympathy and regret at my untoward jump. A bird sits on the hawthorn tree, and sways up and down upon the rosy bough, and plumes itself with many preparatory trills, in anticipation of its evening song.

The cherries hang temptingly crimson and juicy over my head, and I can hear the bees humming about the straw hives at the back of the cottage.

There is scarcely a breeze to thrill the fallen rose leaves, or stir the shadows under the trees. One can hear the cows nibbling at the short, sweet grass in the orchard croft, that is only divided from the garden by a white wooden paling.

At this moment, Meg and Fan are regarding me

with that hopeless, pathetic look which cows know so well how to assume, and I cannot help feeling quite grateful for their mute, sympathetic observance; and yet was it yesterday or the day before that Meg chased me remorselessly across the low meadow, and seemed to glory in my abject flight? Grace said it was but playfulness on Meg's part; but how was I to know that, having given no intimation to man or beast that I desired anything beyond a very quiet stroll to the lane beyond the stile, where the hyacinths grow?

But perhaps Grace was right, and that terrible snorting, stamping, and kicking, that almost frightened me out of my senses, was caused by nothing more than a desire for a little extra excitement, induced perhaps by the sparkling, breezy beauty of the morning. I can very well believe it, so tender and sad are the great brown eyes that divide their attention between the grass and myself.

"Hark, Gracie; what was that?"

"Only the children from the mill—they have been nutting in the Hogate. Dear little feet, how they trot along in spite of weariness and hunger; but they will soon be home now."

"Grace, do you remember our nutting days, with Hector for our attendant? How delightful we thought it to paddle in the brook, and tire ourselves to death; and how anxious we were to gather the nuts that grew on the branches beyond our reach. Why do we never experience the same exuberant joy crowning our success after we enter our teens? I never look at the flowers round the moss tree, or idly pull the nuts from the boughs now, without thinking of those happy days long ago, and wondering why they might not stay."

"Ah, that is so, Belle. Thinking with you is the killjoy of life. The memory of other days confuses and saddens all the happiness the present should bring you."

"But is it not true, Grace? Were those not happy days?"

"Indeed they were. But are you not happy now? What need is there to constantly fly to the past, to compare the careless brightness of childhood with the larger, truer enjoyments of to-day, in order to prove to yourself how empty of happiness the present is? Be thankful to remember your early years were so lovely, and let them rest."

I shake my head wisely, and pluck the soft, green grass with my idle fingers. Grace is practical to prosiness. I think there are no passages in her life over which her well-ordered mind would allow her to waste a single regretful thought. Something of the kind I say, but Grace does not allow me to finish.

"I should like to know, Isabel, why you are less contented, less joyous to-day than you were as a child? I ask for information, as a member of the House of Commons would say."

"Well, then, I decline to give you any information," I reply, vexedly, lying back upon my cushions, and shading my eyes with both hands. "There are some things, my lady, that are better to think of in an undefined condition, and I dislike to analyze any poetic feeling or tender sentiment that happens to accord with my mood."

Grace has lost the better half of my answer by a sudden rush after two enormous Cochin China fowls, who, owing to the gate being slightly open, have made their way unbidden into the garden.

These hideous creatures are supposed to be very fine specimens of their class, and are well-nigh worshipped by their mistress.

They give her as much trouble as only fowls can do; but hot and flushed as she is after the encounter, she comes back as sweet and smiling as ever. But she does not mean that I shall escape the lecture she has evidently prepared for me.

"You are a strange girl," she says, with a touch of sadness in her voice. "Is your childhood only dear to your remembrance because you can never tread its thoughtless paths again? Because you cannot put off your womanly figure and larger experience to be what you were then? Do you really feel regret that crushed hats, tired feet, and torn hands do not seem to-day to be amply recompensed by a little basket of nuts? It is more than foolish, Belle, this constant harking back; it is wicked and ungrateful to God, who has hitherto given you so sweet a life."

"I am not ungrateful," I say, angrily; "and I do not wish to argue with you on the subject."

"Perhaps not," answers Grace, with a provoking smile. "You have one virtue, Belle, for you know when to retire from a contest; but I shall not let you off this time. You have a sickly imagination, that is always craving unnatural food, and despises the nourishing diet of everyday life and experience. You ought to have lived in the middle ages, and been a veritable maiden of romance."

"At all events, I should not have had you to laugh at me," I reply; "and in those days a decent châtelaine would have been ashamed to bully a helpless opponent."

Grace laughs again, and her eyes are full of mischief as she takes a magazine from her pocket, and commences to read, in the most lackadaisical manner imaginable—

"Why doth sadness overshadow
All my soul in a soft rain
Of falling tears, that will not cease?
Sense and memory strive in vain
To stem the waves that sweep and roll
Ir sorrow's unresistless strife
Across my torn and deluged soul,
That seems to have no joy in life."

"Now, my dear Isabel, don't you think that such lines as these are very absurd? And the third verse of this charming poem, as Bruce termed it, certainly could only be excused if written by an old woman, when reviewing a wasted life, and impaired digestion.

"Yet a sadness overpowers me,
All sweet things but make me weep."

But I can endure no longer.

"It is cruel of you," I say, wildly, stopping my ears with my fingers, and feeling on the verge of desperation, wherever that may be. "It is ungenerous, unkind of you to take advantage of my fall, and abuse my poetry. I should be wretched indeed if I had no more sentiment than a cow; but I will

never talk confidentially to you again, never as long as I live."

"If you are happy indulging in such sentiment, I am content, *ma belle*; only we should never discover it from your verses. Happy people are not generally moaning to everybody in print."

I drag the cushion from under my head, and throw it at her; but, laughing gaily at my discomfiture, she runs into the cottage again, and from the open window of her delicious little parlour there floats the refrain of one of Béranger's love songs, and it seems a part of the sky and sunlight and flowers, and of Grace herself, and all the sweet young hopes and loves that have ever lived or will live.

I hide my face, and am angrier than ever with Grace. I could cry with vexation, but my pride forbids it.

"Forgive me, Isabel, it was too bad; on my knees I beg forgiveness. There, now you smile; there is your cushion, and I will help you raise yourself a little to lean against the tree; and see, I have brought you some honey and cakes and tea. Now that I am forgiven, I can be a tyrant again, and insist upon all these good things being eaten at once."

It is impossible to be long angry with Grace; the very touch of her helpful, loving hands seems to endow me with fresh strength. I could not long remain vexed or pained; and perhaps I really needed a little wholesome chastisement.

I drink the tea, and eat the cakes, and then am sufficiently amiable to kiss the white fingers that smooth a stray hair from my face.

"Listen, Gracie—I am sure I heard voices in the lane."

"It is Bruce and the dear old doctor; the silly boy would fly off for him when you fainted. Now you shall be lifted on to the sofa, and we'll do our best to spoil you."

I do not answer her, but I lean back on the cushion, and close my eyes, and only the jessamine that lies on my breast knows of its wild beating and unrest.

But a strange pain gathers about my heart, a dreadful feeling of suffocation and spasm, as though the little garden were not large enough to breathe in. I feel my face paling and paling, in spite of its smiles of welcome, and a mist over my eyes prevents my seeing how near the new-comers are. A confused murmur of voices rouses me for an instant, a light flashes before my eyes, rings of curly hair touch my face, a kiss is dropped upon my lips; and, lingering as I am between two worlds, reluctant to realize either, half-words, so tender, so passionate, reach me as in a dream. Earth can no longer contain my spirit, until its ecstasy is somewhat sobered. I faint away, to breathe in space—completely, fully, though but for an instant—before I learn the trick of counterfeit and moderation which is necessary to the life of love on earth.

A YOUNG gentleman was requested, in company where the younger Colman was present, to sing. He declared that they evidently wished to make a butt of him. "No, my dear sir," said George, "they only want to get a stave out of you."

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER XXVII.—THE AUCTION SALE.

M R. TOWNSEND was completely staggered for the moment; but, recovering himself, he bowed coldly, and was turning away, when Vasquez continued, with an evil grin—

"And our fair daughter, Kate? Of course she is not here?"

Mr. Townsend walked on with Wallace, whose blood ran cold at the thoughts which came over him.

"The villain knows she is here. My darling, my darling! we have brought you right into the midst of danger."

Vasquez did not follow them; and the next moment Wallace spoke to a miner.

"Who was that Spanish-looking fellow who spoke to us?"

"Vasquez, head of a band of robbers," said the miner. "He's come down here to be hung, if he don't mind what he's about."

"Is there any danger—say to those we have with us?" said Wallace, in a hesitating way.

"Danger?—no, you bet," said the man, with a hoarse laugh. "We drove him and his lot out a few nights ago—night you came, stranger—and we'll do it again. Don't you be scared; but if the ruffian interferes with you, shoot him as you would a dog."

The man strolled on, and they were alone.

"Poor Kate always said she should see that villain again," groaned Mr. Townsend; "and here we have left New York and come three thousand miles, to find him here."

"Don't tell her he is here," said Wallace; "and once this sale is over, we will never leave her side till the ruffian is far away."

"There's two thousand dollars on that fellow's head," said the miner, strolling back; "but money's so tarnation plentiful, stranger, that no one seems to care to airm it in that way. Oh, here's the auctioneer."

The sale seemed to excite a great deal of curiosity, and a dozen loafers watched the descent from his horse of a little, wiry, yellow man, who looked at his watch, and then, taking out a toothpick, used it vigorously for a few minutes. After this he lit a very large cigar, gave a few directions to a man with him about fitting up a rostrum of empty flour tubs, of which there was quite a stack close at hand; then taking a folded placard from his pocket, relating to the sale of the ranch, he stuck it on the side of the boarded drinking bar, which he then entered to "liquor up."

Here a certain amount of banter and joking commenced.

"A say, Mr. Going-gone," said one idler, "who's a-going to bid for them pieces o' land?"

"Perhaps yew," said the auctioneer, "or else yew wouldn't laugh at 'em."

"Guess I wouldn't take 'em at a gift," said another.

"Tell you what, Mr. Auctioneer," said another, "we want some spare land up by our claim to put

the wash dirt on. Yew tote them tew thousand acres up our way, and I guess my pard and I'll give yew four hundred dollars for the lot, and that's 'bout twice as much as anybody else 'll bid."

"Yew jest wait a bit," said the auctioneer, "and yew'll see, gents. Why, dew yew think I don't know what capitalists is?"

"Guess there aint many 'bout here with that complaint," said one of the first speakers; "without it's landlord here, who's making a fortune out of whiskey and water."

"Why, gents, what a charge," cried the landlord; "when yew know as water's skeercer than whiskey, 'cept what's been used a dozen times for washing gold."

At last the auctioneer strolled out, to find his rostrum ready, and a fair number of spectators assembled.

"I calkerlate there'll be some biddin's after all," he said, as he ran his eyes over the assembly; after which he adjourned to the bar once more, and made what he called a square meal of corned beef, biscuit, and pickled onions.

Meanwhile the people outside were growing impatient, and messages were sent in, asking the auctioneer to come out, to all of which he replied that it was not yet time.

The last time his man came in he made the auctioneer stare.

"What?" he said.

"They say they'll have yew out, and swing yew to the highest tree if yew don't come smart."

"But they don't mean it, Jeff?"

"I guess they do," said the man—"they're about as ill-looking a set of cusses as ever I set eyes on. Guess I'd come if I was yew."

"Wal, I reckon I won't keep 'em waitin' no longer," said the auctioneer. "Not as I'm 'skart 'bout what they say, but 'tis 'bout time now."

"Hour after," said his man.

"Is it really? Well, I shouldn't have thought it. Go and ring the bell."

The man went out and began to ring vigorously at the bell, while the auctioneer, amidst a roar of grumbling, walked coolly out, and began picking his teeth.

"All in good time, gentlemen, all in good time," he cried; and he ran his eye over the company present, seeing on one side Wallace Foster and Mr. Townsend, whom he at once set down as bidders; on the other side Vasquez and a group of his ruffian followers; while the more peaceable people were also clustered together, and also well armed.

"Why aint Si Slocum here?" whispered the landlord to the storekeeper. "Guess he should be here by now. You sent?"

"Sent! Yes, of course I did," was the reply.

"But was your boy to be trusted? Did he go?"

"He swore he did."

"He's been bought over, safe, or else Si Slocum would have been here."

"Wal," said the other, "I hardly know what to say, only that it do look strange."

"Can't be helped now. We did all we could, and it's his look-out, not ours. We warned him right enough."

"Yes, poor chap! Tell you what, let's buy it between us."

"Good!"

The storekeeper and the landlord quietly shook hands together; but seeing that the auctioneer glanced towards them, they separated.

There seemed to be an expectation amongst the peaceable people that there would be another fight that day; and more than one hand played with the butt of a revolver, for it was like a direct challenge this coming of the Vasquez party amongst them.

Defiant glances flew from side to side, and some slight cause would doubtless have been seized upon as an excuse for a beginning of the fray, when Vasquez drew all eyes upon him by exclaiming—

"Now, mister auctioneer, if you haven't set yourself up there as a target for pistol practice, s'pose you begin."

"Why, Wallace," whispered Mr. Townsend, "he knows we want the land, and is going to bid against us."

"He can't know it. Impossible."

But though Wallace said this, his own feelings belied his words, and he became profoundly agitated as he felt that his hopes were about to be dashed by his old enemy and rival.

"Well," said Mr. Townsend, "if he does bid for it, we must bid higher. I'll go to the last penny I've got, Wallace, my boy, and that means two thousand dollars. Then you take up the bidding with yours, which will altogether make four thousand. He'll never go as high as that."

"I think not," said Wallace; "but I'm rather nervous."

"But look here, my boy," said Mr. Townsend—"the auctioneer would rather take our bids than those of such a ruffian as this."

"Yes—if he dared," said Wallace. "But look there."

Mr. Townsend glanced in the indicated direction, and saw that Vasquez had pulled out a revolver, and laid it upon the head of the barrel behind which he was sitting.

"If that revolver goes off, and hits the auctioneer because it won't wait any longer," said Vasquez, in a loud voice, "it's no fault of mine."

His followers laughed loudly, and some of the opposition joined.

"All right, gentlemen," said the auctioneer, nervously; "I'm going to begin. Now, gentlemen, I have to offer to you for your consideration two strips of valuable—"

"All right," said Vasquez, "we know all about that. Go on, and put up Slocum's ranch first."

"It must be Si Slocum's ranch," whispered Wallace, "and this is out of spite. Si must be living near here, and he is going to buy the place over him."

"Impossible," said Mr. Townsend. "No, my boy; he suspects that the land is valuable, and is going in opposition to us. Never mind, we must have the land at any cost. Don't stop when you come to the end of yours—I dare say I can raise a few thousand dollars amongst old New York friends, if they know there is something valuable at the back. And you are really sure there is silver?"

"Tons upon tons of the richest silver ore, sir. Hush!"

"Well, as yew like, gentlemen," said the auctioneer; "I won't trouble yew with preliminaries. Slocum's ranch must be the second lot. The first is the thousand acres of land, more or less, lying north-west of the boundaries of the ranch."

And he went on to define its boundaries.

"Now, gentlemen, what shall I say?"

"Nothing!" said Vasquez, with a hoarse laugh, "it's all rough mountain. Knock it down."

There was a roar of laughter at this sally; but no one bid.

"Come, gentlemen," said the auctioneer, "give me a start."

"Knock it down to nobody for nothing," cried Jake Bledsoe.

And there was another roar.

"Put up that second lot, will you—Si Slocum's ranch," roared Vasquez.

"There, it is Si Slocum," whispered Wallace.

And then, raising his voice, he said, quietly—

"I'll give you five hundred dollars for this first lot of land, Mr. Auctioneer."

He might have had it for half, for the hammer went down directly, and Vasquez and his party stared.

"He shouldn't have had that if I had thought of it," said the ruffian; "but never mind, he sha'n't be able to hold it."

"Lot two—Si Slocum's ranch," said the auctioneer.

And he was proceeding to describe it at length, when Vasquez took up his revolver as if playing with it, but keeping the muzzle pointed at the auctioneer as he roared—

"Two hundred dollars. Knock it down."

"We must not let that ruffian buy it," said Mr. Townsend. "You would like it too, even if Si Slocum did not want it?"

"Yes," said Wallace, "all the mineral-producing part. I'll bid, and you follow me."

"Two hundred dollars," said the auctioneer.

And the storekeeper opened his mouth to bid, when he caught sight of Vasquez's face, and drew back.

"Yes, two hundred dollars," cried Vasquez; "knock it down, will you?"

"Two fifty," said Wallace, quietly.

And Vasquez turned round, pistol in hand; but Wallace did not flinch, while the auctioneer proved to be of sterner stuff than Vasquez believed, for, stooping down, he whispered to his man, and then, pocketing his hammer, he too took out a revolver, cocked it, and laid it before him.

"One likes to be in the fashion," he said, meaningly. "Come, Jeff, follow your master's lead."

The man took out a revolver and laid it before him, while Vasquez, scowling, savagely roared out—

"Three hundred dollars—more than it's worth. Now knock it down, you sir, or it'll be the worse—"

"Four hundred dollars," cried Wallace.

"Good—four hundred," cried the auctioneer.

And Vasquez raised his pistol to take aim at

Wallace; but he changed his aim to the auctioneer, starting somewhat as he saw Jeff, the clerk, take deliberate aim in return.

"Don't play with your six-shooter like that, my good man," cried the auctioneer to Vasquez; "it might go off and hit me, and if it did yew'd be a dead man—for Jeff here never misses. He'd put five shots through the five of diamonds at thirty paces, and yew're not ten. If yew'll stand still, or be tied up to that tree, I'll bet yew ten spots he'll put a bullet in each of yew're eyes, one through the centre of your nose, and one at each corner of your mouth, fair shooting. I keep him on purpose, don't I, Jeff?"

"Guess you do," said Jeff, sturdily. "Is the gentleman on with the bet?"

Vasquez's eyes glowed like coals as, seeing that bullying and intimidation would not do, he roared out—

"Five hundred dollars!"

"Six," said Wallace, quietly.

"Seven!" roared Vasquez.

"Eight," said Wallace.

Vasquez got up, walked into the open space fronting the rostrum, and cried in a voice of thunder—

"I want that ranch, and I'll have it, or somebody will bleed. Now, then, nine hundred dollars. Knock it down."

He turned towards Wallace, with his pistol pointed at him, ready to fire if he made a fresh bid; but all the same the young man's lips were parting, when there was the sharp beat of hoofs, and before any one could realize what was to happen, Si Slocum dashed into the assembly, roaring out in a voice of thunder—

"Stop this sale!"

"Stop your mouth, sir," said the auctioneer, excitedly. "Are you mad? Come, gentlemen, we've had enough noise and threats already. Guess I appeal to all here on the side of law and order to back me up. I've got to sell; and, Jehoshaphat, sell I will. Now, sir," he continued, looking at Wallace, "nine hundred dollars is the bid; shall I say a thousand for yew?"

"Stop," cried Si again. "This sale of my ranch don't go on. It's mine, I tell yew all, and I'll protect it to the last drop of my blood."

"Nine hundred dollars," cried Vasquez, savagely. "Go on; I'm the buyer."

"A thousand," cried Wallace; for the auctioneer's hammer was falling.

"Good, a thousand," cried the auctioneer.

"Eleven—"

"Hundred," Vasquez would have said; but Si Slocum had struck him across the mouth a back-handed blow, which sent him staggering back; and in an instant revolvers were out on all hands, and the fight once more began.

The fight was fierce but short, for at the end of a few minutes the party of Vasquez found themselves so thoroughly outnumbered that they took flight, and were pursued by the miners till they had had recourse to their old tactics, and found refuge amongst the rocks at the foot of the mountain, where, as before, pursuit ceased; but the miners

vowed vengeance against them, and the day of retribution was only put off for the time being.

There was a very warm greeting between Si Slocum and Wallace as soon as the former had cooled down; and Mr. Townsend was about to speak to him when the auctioneer, who had been busily replenishing the missing cartridges in his revolver, coolly turned to the assembled people, saying—

"I calkerlate, citizens, we'll jest go on with this here sale."

"Why, you've lost one of your best bidders, squire," said a bystander, who was binding a handkerchief round a wound.

"Wal, yes, I haave," said the auctioneer; "but I've a bid here of a thousand dollars, to which I shall hold this gentleman, without some one else bids."

"I protest, as the owner of this ranch, against the sale going on," said Si, impetuously.

"Which I jest can't help, stranger," said the auctioneer. "I've got orders to sell, and must sell. Yew can settle all that farther on, if yew don't buy yourself."

"Slocum," said Wallace, "I have come to buy a quantity of this land. Let me become the purchaser, and end this dispute. We can agree over it afterwards."

Si looked him full in the face for a few minutes, and then held out his hand, gripping that of the young man firmly.

"I can trust yew, Mr. Wallace," he said, heartily. "Go on, and we'll settle matters afterwards. But do you want to go in for cattle breeding?"

"I'll explain afterwards."

"Now, then, citizens," said the auctioneer, laying his loaded revolver before him, "I've an offer of a thousand dollars for this here vallerble ranch; and if no one else is disposed to bid, it belongs to stranger there."

No one spoke; and after a little hesitation the tract of land was knocked down to Wallace Foster, who had secured the greater part of the metalliferous tract he sought, the ordinary legal arrangements being now only necessary to complete the transaction.

Mr. Townsend, who had been waiting his opportunity, now turned to Si, and held out his hand, which the trapper did not take, but stood looking full in his former master's face.

"Don't you know me again, Slocum?" said Mr. Townsend. "Have trouble and time altered me so that you don't know your old employer?"

"They've changed yew, sir, a deal," said Si, quietly, and with some dignity; "but I never forgot faces."

"I forgot," said Mr. Townsend, hastily. "Slocum, I remember how we parted—very bad friends."

"Through no fault of mine, sir," said Si, quietly, and a deep frown settled on his face.

"Through no fault of yours, Slocum," said Mr. Townsend, warmly. "I was foolish, impetuous, and hasty, and I did you a grievous wrong, and insulted you cruelly. As a man, I ask your pardon humbly, for I was wrong."

"Mr. Townsend," said Si, catching the extended hand in a grip that made the old man wince, "don't

say another word about it, sir. It was all a mistake, and nothing could be more handsome than your apology. But what brings you here, sir?"

"Poverty, Slocum, partly."

"Poverty? You poor, sir, while I've grown rich?" said Si. "It seems impossible."

"It's the simple truth, Slocum; and I have come come out here with my dear friend and son-in-law that is to be, Wallace Foster."

"Why, this is a surprise, sir, and no mistake," cried Si, with his eyes glistening with pleasure. "And Miss Kate?"

"Is here too, Slocum."

"What here, sir, in this rowdy place?"

"Yes," said Mr. Townsend, looking rather troubled.

"Of course, yes," said Si, hastily. "You both brought her. I shouldn't stay though, sir, for I don't think it's safe. But, of course, Mr. Foster here has been buying land, and he is, of course, going to settle. There, you must all come over to my place. Rewth will be no end glad to see Miss Kate again."

"But we are four, Slocum," said Wallace, quietly; though there was a strange feeling of discomfort in his breast, and he felt that under Si Slocum's roof Kate would be far safer than at the gulch.

"Four, sir? Wal, if yew was six I guess there'd be enough for yew all to eat, and as hearty a welcome as yew'd wish for."

"Well, Si," said Wallace, "if we should not be incommoding you."

"Incommoding? There aint such a word out in the back settlements, Squire Wallace. Look here, sir, when friends come to us out here, we make the beds out as far as they go, and then make it up with straw and blankets. Yew won't mind roughing it, I know, so long as Mr. Townsend there, and Miss Kate, are made comfortable."

"Indeed, I should not, Si, and I have something very important to announce to you about your ranch and the rocky hills north."

"Have you?" said Si, anxiously. "Not airthquakes, eh?"

And he began to examine his horse's bridle as he took it from a boy who had held it for some time past.

"No, no," said Wallace, laughing. "Good news, my friend, which you will have to share."

"Oh, I'm always open to good news," said Si; "and between ourselves, I've just found out that I've Vasquez for a neighbour, and am afraid he'll be for coming down. A couple of friends at the ranch won't be out of place; and really, sir, Miss Kate will be safer there than here. I'd say go off at once for Sonora, but I'm afraid those ruffians would molest you on the road. So come on with me."

"We will, Slocum, gladly," said Mr. Townsend. "But come now and see my daughter. She will be glad to see an old friend."

"Yes, I think we will go up and see her," said Si eagerly, as he passed his arm through his horse's bridle. Then in a whisper to Wallace, "Look here, sir, don't you never leave that young lady alone here without plenty of protection. There's no law here except what men make for themselves, and precious little order, sir."

Wallace nodded his head, and the little party

began to walk up the rough street of sheds which formed the main thoroughfare of the gulch, when they met the storekeeper coming towards them; and as he approached he beckoned Si Slocum to come aside.

"Is anything the matter?" said Si, hastily.

"News aint good," said the storekeeper.

"Make haste," said Si; "don't keep me waiting."

"Well, it's like this," said the storekeeper—"Nick Roes was up in the long gulch, coming back from his claim to fetch some fixings tew my place, when he heard the firing, and saw Vasquez and his lot coming towards him. To have met 'em meant being plugged; so he slipped behind the rocks, and heard Vasquez swear as he'd burn yewre ranch about yewre ears, and as soon as the pursuit stopped, he and Jake Bledsoe and Coyote Tobe set off for the ranch, doubling round the gulch here, and making straight away for yewre home."

"Follow me, some of yew," cried Si, hoarsely. "Curse them, they'll get over the mountain track, and be there before I can reach home. Rewth—Freddie—God bless and help you all."

Then, bounding on to the back of the mustang he was leading by the bridle, he set off at full gallop for the mountain ranch.

An Indian Massacre.

MERCY? Well, as far as I know Injuns, I should say as mercy is a thing as isn't in their composition. They can't know what it is. You remember how I told you about their torturing the poor fellow who was out with me—burning him to death. Well, if a man understood mercy, would he do such a thing as that, and dance, and laugh, and be in a high state of delight about it the whole time? Don't think he would.

I never knew Injuns have mercy on their poor slaves of wives, who have to do all the work for them. Then, they never spare their horses; so how's it to be expected that they should spare people who fall into their hands?

They're savages, and nothing else but savages; and you can make no better of them. I don't say we had any right to come on the land where they'd had it their own way all their lives, and I don't say we hadn't. But if they hadn't quarrelled with us for trespassing, they would with some neighbouring tribe, and fought and scalped and burned to their hearts' content.

The land ought to be free to anybody, and so our people think, when they keep pushing out farther and farther, pioneering and settling down; and precious hard they suffer for it sometimes.

Ah, I could tell you some strange tales about the sufferings of some of the fellows who have taken up a claim, built their bit of a farm, and begun to get things prosperous—a few cattle and sheep, a bit of garden, and a dairy and pigs, all looking bright and prosperous, after years of hard work.

But there, I'll tell you about one such case that occurred when I was in the cavalry.

We were at a place called Sage Creek, where there was a fort, and a company of foot, and our squadron, about a hundred and fifty strong, had

been sent out to help them; for the Injuns had got very troublesome, rampaging about, and doing no end of mischief along the frontiers and amongst the farms.

They were said to be Pawnees; and just before we got up to the fort with our baggage waggons, ready for a long stay, we found that about half a company of men from a neighbouring fort had gone out, with a small body of young farmers, to punish the Injuns for one of their raids.

They were all well armed, the young farmers mounted; and they meant business.

That was all. I say they went out to punish the Injuns, and people said the Injuns had punished them; for they never came back.

This being the case, as soon as we had squared up quarters a bit, we had to go out scouring the country in all directions, to see if we could hear anything of them—about fifty men they were; but no sign or trace could we get of them.

We kept hearing of the Injun bands, though. Now they'd gone north, now they'd gone south, or east, or west; and whenever we went in either of these directions, it was to find that the varmint had either just gone or were somewhere else altogether.

For, you see, the great North-west is a rather big bundle of hay in which to look for a needle.

So sure as we were right off on an expedition for a couple of days did we hear of the Injuns having made a descent somewhere, and scalped all they could come near.

Then people got to complaining, and asking what use we were. They said that we always went the way where there was sure to be no fighting, and laughed at us; till our leader first of all said that he'd always keep us close to the fort, waiting for trouble to come, for it was like hunting a will-o'-the wisp.

We got tired of that, though, at the end of a week, and this time our captain said that he'd take provision waggons with us, and he'd stay out till we met the Injuns, or found the poor fellows who were lost.

We felt no fear of any number of Injuns ourselves, if we could only get at them; for we were well mounted, and each man carried his revolver, a rifle, and a good sharp cavalry sabre, ready for close quarters.

We set off, then, one bright morning, with our little baggage-train of waggons, and for the next three days we were taking slow, easy marches from bluff to bluff, and making a short stay at every bit of a farm settlement; but no news of the Indians.

On the fourth day out, we made a bit of a halt for water at as snug a farmstead as ever I saw. It looked new, of course; but there was every mark of prosperity about it.

The place belonged to two brothers—fine, handsome young fellows—and they'd got their wives there, and two sisters, with three young fellows who acted as helps about the farm.

"You're a long way out here from help," I said to one of them, while we were halting.

And a bit of merry chaff flew about from the men to the girls, who were delighted to see so many fresh faces; and in a joking way several of our men told

them that, as soon as the expedition was over, they should come back and marry them.

"You're a long way out here from help," I said to one of the brothers. "Aint you afraid of Injuns?"

"Not a bit," he said. "Why should I? We never hurt them. And besides, if they should turn nasty, I reckon we've got rifles and powder enough to keep them off for a month."

I shook my head, and went to my horse, mounting him; and, as I sat in my saddle, I couldn't help thinking how horrible it would be if the Injuns did make a raid on such a place.

We were soon off, with promises given jokingly to come again; and then we went off north for about two hours, when, without a word of explanation, our leader suddenly gave the order, right counter-march, and we rode straight back for the farm.

"What's this mean?" we said.

And then a bit of joking went on about the captain having lost his heart at the farm, and going back to find it.

What prompted him, I don't know; but at last, when we were about a mile from the place, the bugle rang out to trot, and then canter, and we went away at a swinging rate; for there in front, over the farm, hung a cloud of smoke, and as we got nearer we could see fire, and when we got quite near—blood.

Just in that short time the Injuns had come down upon the peaceful home, driven off the cattle, taken all they wanted, and then set the place on fire.

Where all had been merry, bright, and cheery three or four hours ago, now all was silent, except the crackling of the burning wood; and when we looked in at the burning place, several of us shrank back with horror.

For there, just as they had been cut down and butchered, lay the scalpless bodies of one of the brothers and the three helps, nearly burned out of recognition.

Just in front of the door lay the young wife of one of them, with her dead baby hugged close to her breast, the tiny little thing's head split by a tomahawk, the mother with three arrows in her, and her long, fair locks torn from her head.

As for the other women, they were either dead in the burning house, or carried off to be the slaves and worse of the treacherous varmint who had surprised the house.

I heard our captain utter a deep, low curse, as he stood beside that poor woman's body, and the hands of our men trembled as they clutched their rifles and longed to be at the wretches who had done this thing.

"Put that poor thing and her child in the first ambulance," the captain said at last. "We'll bury her by and by. As for those poor wretches—"

He glanced in at the open cottage door, to see them in the midst of a furious glowing fire, and he shook his head, for it would have been impossible to get them out.

"Now, then, quick, best scout in front. We must follow their trail."

Two men cantered to the front, and a minute after uttered a shout to intimate that they had found the trail; and the order was given "Forward," when we



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were brought to a full stop by a horrible figure crawling out of some standing corn, trying to rise, and then falling and holding out one hand.

I hope I may never see such a terrible object again. I had seen such dead, but not living.

For as some of us dismounted and the doctor got alongside, we saw that he had five or six arrows in him. His arms and shoulders were scored with cuts from tomahawks, and the scalp had been torn from his head.

The Injuns thought him dead when they left him. How he had lived so long puzzled even our doctor.

But he lived long enough to tell us that the Injuns surprised them about an hour after we had gone, and he had barely time to get his rifle and pouch and to fly into the standing corn.

"The others were cut down directly," he groaned; "and my poor wife and sisters—"

He groaned again, and remained silent for a few minutes. Then going on—

"I couldn't bear it," he moaned, "and called myself a coward for forsaking them. I then opened fire on them from my hiding-place, and brought down four before they galloped through the corn, found me, and—look!"

He pointed to his head, moaning the while, and looking from one to the other as if for pity, as we mentally swore that many an Injun life should pay for this.

"Put him in the ambulance," said the captain. "We must get forward, lads."

We were going to lift him, when he motioned us back.

"Doctor," he said, with his voice failing—"no use—not want—to live—something—out of my misery."

It did not need the doctor to do that, for, as the last words came in a faint whisper, and the poor fellow's head fell back—he was dead.

In a few minutes he was placed beside the poor woman and her little one in the ambulance, and we were going at a sharp trot on the Injun trail.

It was plain enough, for they had the cattle and sheep to drive; but they had got at least two hours' start, and we had all that to make up without tiring our horses, and we had already been in the saddle some hours.

There was little chance then of our coming up with them that day; but we should have followed them for a year but what we would have caught up to them some time, for every man's teeth were set, and there was a fixed, determined look that promised ill for some of them.

It was about the middle of the next day when, after resting for the night, we first caught sight of the rear of the Injuns, and, to our great delight, they did not gallop off.

"That means strength," said one old sergeant close to me—I was only a private then.

And so it proved, for the war party were full four hundred strong.

Better and better. Instead of continuing their flight, they turned upon us, and began to come down upon us like the wind.

Our captain soon made his plans. The ambulance

and baggage waggons fell into a square, with their drivers and guards inside, to defend them from attack; while we were drawn up in line on an easy slope, which the Injuns had to rise to get at us.

"We won't charge them yet," the captain said, to everybody's disappointment, "but give them one volley first, and then sling rifles, out sword, and at them."

This sounded bad to me; but our captain knew what he was about, and that the volley would check the charge, else it would have gone ill with us.

On they came, yelling and waving their bows, while we sat like a line of statues.

"Fire low, men—a steady volley," cried the captain. "I shall wait till they are within fifty yards."

And so he did. They seemed close on to us, and my blood was tingling as the word came—"Fire!"

Then, almost like one piece, our rifles rung out above the thunder of the horses' hoofs, and just as they seemed about to ride us down.

The effect was awful. Fifty or sixty horses and men went down, and those that came behind went down over them.

Not one galloped on to us, and we had time to sling rifles and out swords before the smoke cleared away, when we answered the call to advance with a fierce tiger, and went at them like mad.

There were many of them remounting, having fallen unhurt; and there was a general hesitation amongst them as to what they should do next.

We were into them before they had time to make up their minds, sabreing them and rolling them over right and left; for they had no chance against our long swords, with their bows and arrows and tomahawks. They were pretty well naked, too; so that every slash told, our men cutting the harder as they thought of the pillaged farm.

By and by men seemed to think of their revolvers, and they began to speak with effect, as, after a brief struggle the Injuns broke, and galloped off, though four to one, for their lives.

For quite an hour that fierce pursuit was kept up, till our horses could stand no more, and the recall brought them back panting, and dripping with blood and perspiration, to finish their task, before rallying, with the intent of steadily continuing the pursuit until we could read the demons another lesson.

I said finish our task, for it's no use to keep anything back. There was no question of taking prisoners then, every wounded man was killed off with as little mercy as they showed to others, though we did respect their scalps.

I was thinking about this the next day, when I came to reckon up that we had rubbed out quite a hundred and twenty of these wretches; and though we were steadily keeping on in pursuit, I did not feel so eager to come up with them, for I thought that this ought to be a sufficiently severe lesson to them; and I did not like the killing off the wounded, though they were like so many wild beasts, and more of our men were hurt by the treacherous arrows and knives of the wounded than had suffered in the charge.

I was thinking of all this as we were riding over a hill, with scouts out, our wounded in the ambulance waggon, and the trail plain before us,

when our leader, who was using his glass, called out—

"Lieutenant Revelle, take four men, and ride down yonder into the hollow. There's something white there that looks suspicious."

I was one of the four told off, and we cantered down the hillside and over the long grass; when, as we got about half a mile from our party, I felt all my sentiments of pity for the Injuns we had killed fade away.

For here was the end of the mystery of the fifty men who had gone out after Injuns and never returned. They had evidently been surprised when bivouacking, and killed to a man.

There their poor bones lay amongst the grass, bleaching in the sun—a grinning skull here, a thighbone there, another skull, and another, and another—all with the mark of the deadly tomahawk where it had crashed into the brain.

These were evidently the remains of men who had tried to escape, and been cut down. We soon found those who had made a sturdy defence lying pretty closely together; and as the lieutenant and three of us dismounted, it was where the whitened skeletons lay thick, while the long, sharp Injun arrows lay thicker.

One poor fellow lay on his back, with an arrow close to his head, and three more, two of which had pierced his breast-bone, while the third had penetrated the back.

I went down on one knee, and tried to draw out an arrow.

"Too fast," I said to the man by me, who was holding his horse. "That shot must have been fired at very close quarters."

"Poor fellows," said the lieutenant, who was looking on. "Count the skulls," he continued, firmly; "we must have ten Indians for every poor fellow massacred here."

"Yes, it's been a massacre, lieutenant," I said. "Look at that poor wretch."

And I pointed to one poor fellow lying on his face, who had no less than five arrows in him, one that had penetrated the back of his head having been broken off, leaving a few inches standing.

A little farther on another lay, with three arrows shot deep into his chest; and away to the left was a heap of mangled bones, where the poor fellows had been shot down as they hung thickly together, evidently fighting to the last.

Not a single weapon was left; all had been carried off, with every rag of clothing save a few shreds here and there, enough to show that they had been uniform clothes.

On counting, we found just the number of skulls—fifty; some of them being scattered to some distance, as if their owners had made a long run for life.

It was a ghastly sight; for in places the horses could not take a step without kicking against bones, the noble beasts trying very hard not to trample them under hoof, and carefully avoiding the skulls.

I shuddered as I saw plenty of great birds sailing about, knowing full well what it meant. The next minute I was cantering to the hill to report what we had found.

It resulted in a halt, to collect and bury the bones of the poor fellows we had found, a spare pole from the baggage waggon being set up to mark the spot.

Our stay was impatiently made, for all our fellows were mad to get at the Injun once more; but we had given them such a lesson that they would not meet us again, striking right off, and travelling night and day, so that we had to be content with the thrashing we had given them.

We had the satisfaction of knowing, though, that for a time the savage raids that had been made in that part were stopped for quite a year before they began again.

A South African Sketch.

WHEN a young Africander begins to court, he dresses himself as neatly as possible, has his horse (which every young Dutchman possesses) well cleaned and fed, the stirrup-irons and bit polished like silver. He then proceeds to the dwelling of his intended, on approaching which, generally towards evening, he makes the horse amble, jump, and perform all sorts of antics, to show off his horsemanship.

On his arrival, the animal is off-saddled by one of the Totties (Hottentots), stabled, and well fed. The youngster then proceeds inwards, accompanied by some of the children, salutes the father and mother—"Dag oom, dag tante (good day, uncle; good day, aunt)"—inquires after the health of the family, tells all the news, and makes himself generally agreeable, but shows no particular attention to the object of his affections. If an eligible party, he is treated most hospitably. After supper, he remains talking till the parents retire. When he and his beloved are left alone, they generally sit up till two or three a.m. Should he have made good progress, he returns about once a fortnight, and the same process is continued.

Sometimes it occurs when he resides at a distance that he can only come once a month, but generally when in earnest three or four visits suffice. When he and his beloved have arranged matters to their satisfaction, they ask the permission of her parents to marry; to which the old people (who have long been aware of what is going on) give an acquiescent answer. Then the young gentleman, who is henceforth called the *brindegom* (bridegroom), proceeds home, asks his parents' permission, goes to the nearest village, has the banns published in his and her parishes, gets himself measured for his wedding clothes, and joyfully awaits the happy day. If not too far distanced, he pays one or two visits to his beloved. She, on her part, has her dresses ordered at the next village.

On the day previous to the wedding the bridegroom arrives with his best man, and if far from the church the waggon or cart is inspanned, and the bride and groom, best man and bridesmaid, depart in the afternoon for the town or village where the binding ceremony is to be performed. On their arrival the bride and bridesmaid repair to the residence of some uncle or aunt, where they remain over-night.

About nine o'clock next morning the bridegroom

arrives at her dwelling, with a couple of handsome carts, wedding favours blowing on their horses' ears, whip, and the breasts of the happy and best men. The church bell has been ringing for the last half-hour, and the bride and maid are entreated to make haste. At last out they come, the bride escorted by the *strooi jonker* (best man); those two mount one cart, the bridegroom and *strooi meisje* (bridesmaid) the other. In this order they repair to church. On arrival they are conducted in the same order in front of the pulpit (which in Dutch churches is in the middle), where four chairs have been placed, on which they sit down, the bride and bridegroom in the middle, the best man and bridesmaid outside. They then wait till the clergyman has arrived (sometimes they must wait half an hour), when they are conducted by the precentor to the vestry to sign the register, the bridegroom walking thither on the left side of the bride; then they come out again and reseat themselves till the clergyman appears in the pulpit, when they stand up; but now the bridegroom places the bride to his left. The minister proceeds with his formulary. The parties make no responses, but bow when interrogated, till the minister tells them "*Geef malkander de regter hand*" ("Give each other the right hand"), when they begin to remove their gloves, which is sometimes a work of no small difficulty; they then join hands, and when asked if they take one another as man and wife, only nod. After this the clergyman pronounces the blessing, when the young couple proceed, but not as before, to their carts, which are drawn up in front of the churchyard, through which they have to walk; but now the bridegroom conducts his bride to his own cart, which they mount, and proceed to the house where the bride passed the night (the best man and bridesmaid follow in the other cart), where they have a slight refection. They depart early in the afternoon to the bride's residence.

In the meantime, great preparations have been making at home for the wedding dinner. First of all, the floors of the house have all been smeared with cow-dung and water (unless they have boarded floors). Then, after forbidding the children to walk over the rooms, the bride's chamber is prepared. The best room in the house is decorated, a grand bed is made up, the quilt enriched with flowers, natural or artificial, stitched on. One room is set apart for the bridegroom and bride to receive in. The preparations for the dinner have been going on since the previous day. *Speen varken* (sucking pigs), fowls, &c., have been slaughtered, the fattest sheep prepared, a good fat ham, pies, tarts, &c., &c., got ready. The best old wine has been procured by the cask, the oldest brandy has been put in bottles, with herbs for *soopjes* (drams).

When everything is in order the table is laid, and looks charming. An hour has previously been appointed for the party to arrive; and precisely at the time, shots are heard from all the farms along the road which the bridal party are coming. All the young Africanders have provided themselves with guns and ammunition. As soon as the bride's cart appears, a fusillade commences, which lasts till the carts stop before the door. Then the bride-

groom and bride alight, walk into the house to the room appointed, both attired in their wedding finery, but salute no one.

After taking their seats on two chairs tied together by satin ribbon, under a looking-glass and a garland, the best man and bridesmaid go out to the company assembled in the *voorhuis* (entrance hall) and bring in the parents of the bride and groom, and then the other relatives and guests, he conducting the females, she the males, till all have been presented. Each one on presentation wishes them joy on their accomplished marriage. If relatives, they kiss the bride and bridegroom; otherwise shake hands with them.

After the presentation, the bridegroom and bride are summoned to dinner (the bride with her veil on). They are placed in the middle; in front of them a highly decorated branch candlestick with four candles, and the bride's cake, with a large bouquet in a hole therein. The elder guests and parents take their seats at the first table. The father says grace. Then the guests set to. After demolishing curries (swimming in fat), *speen varkjes* (sucking pigs), ham, chicken, yellow rice, tarts, puddings, fruit, the health of the bride and bridegroom is drunk. When the elders are sufficiently crammed, they rise from the table, leaving the young couple to preside. Then fresh plates are laid, and the other guests take their places. Sometimes six or seven changes of guests take their seats. Of food there is enough and to spare; of excellent wine also, and a hospitable welcome to all, rich or poor.

By the time all have had their dinners it will be about nine p.m. The bride and bridegroom have, after the second or third table, repaired again to the reception-room. Should the parents be religiously inclined, no dancing is allowed, but all sorts of indoor games are played till daylight does appear; but if otherwise, the tables are cleared out of the dining-room and *voorhuis*, and dancing is kept up till morning. About midnight the bride and bridegroom disappear, and are not visible again till breakfast-time, by which time most, if not all, of the guests have gone home. A South African wedding is a jolly affair. The hospitality of the Dutch lovers is unbounded, and a better-hearted set of men are not to be found on earth. Heartiness and conviviality is the order of the day with them. May their shadows (which are considerable) never be less.

JAMES ALBERY, the dramatist, was descending the steps of his club, when a stranger addressed him thus: "I beg your pardon, but is there a gentleman in this club with one eye of the name of X—?" Albery answered the question eagerly by another: "Stop a moment. What's the name of his other eye?"

AN EXPENSIVE DRESS.—On the first night of a new piece, a pretty young actress advances to the front of the stage flaunting in an exquisite new costume. "That must have cost 3,000 francs!" said, audibly, a lady who sat with her husband in the front row. "No, no—only 2,500," he said, mechanically. Then he found her eye fixed on him, and was silent.

A Great Failure.

ONE morning, about two weeks ago, Mrs. McGoochen beamed blandly across the table on her husband, and informed him that she had concluded to discharge the maid, and do her own work. This announcement startled Mr. McGoochen almost as much as if she had declared her determination to commit suicide. He had long known that the girl was a heavy drain upon his meagre salary, but his wife had educated him to regard her as indispensable, and he had made up his mind to endure it for ever. That she would voluntarily offer to dispense with the services of a girl was something for which he was not prepared. Looking at her with an expression in which hope and doubt painfully mingled, he said—

"Yes?—why, you can't do it, Eliza."

"Can't do it, indeed! I'd like to know what is the reason? Lots of women in this town do a great deal more, and think nothing of it. Our family's small—just you and me and Henry Ward—and if I can't do the work for us three, I'd better go to a hospital and done with it."

"What put you into that notion?" asked her husband, scarcely yet recovering from his surprise.

"Well, Peter," she replied, speaking in a tender, self-reproving tone, "I'll tell you. I've been thinking lately how hard you have to work, and how little I have done to assist you, in comparison with what I might and ought to do, and it appears to me that I should try to reduce our expenses as much as possible, and the best way that I know of is to do my own housework. We are poor, just making a beginning in life, and it is my duty to help you."

With a voice almost choked with emotion at the unexpected evidence of his wife's devotion and energy, he feebly essayed to break her resolution, saying that he didn't want her to be a slave for him, that she was too delicate for the task she contemplated, that all he asked of her was continued love and sympathy—

"Oh, that's all romance!" interrupted Mrs. McGoochen. "It's high time love and sympathy were assuming a practical form. I'll discharge the girl this very day. But there is one condition, Peter."

"Name it, my noble wife."

"That new carpet you thought we were unable to get. Now, if I do my own work it will save at least thirty pounds a year, and you can certainly afford the carpet."

"Of course, my love, if you are satisfied you are not undertaking more than you can perform."

She was satisfied, and so it was settled. Mac lugged the carpet home at noon, and found the girl gone. His wife was gone, too; but she returned very shortly, having only been around telling the neighbours that she was doing her own work. Dinner was late, but then it was the first meal by her fair fingers, and he could make allowance for the novelty of the position in which she found herself placed.

Acting on her suggestions, Mac brought home a new rocking-chair when he came to supper. They were saving thirty pounds a year, and could well afford such little things. When his wife returned from her visit to the rest of the neighbours, whom she had been informing that she was now doing her

own work, she was delighted with the new chair, and declared that they must have a full set of furniture to match it.

"You know, Peter, that I will more than save the cost of it in the course of a year, and I will feel so proud to know that my labour secured it."

This was said so beseechingly, and she hung so lovingly on his neck the while, that Mac couldn't resist the appeal. The furniture was sent down the next day.

About three days after, Mrs. McGoochen coaxed Peter into buying her a silk dress, and the next day she wheedled him out of a set of jewellery. It was the same old plea—she was lightening the expenses so much by doing her own work, that she felt she was entitled to something extra. It would amount to no more, she reasoned, than the hire of a girl, and Peter could well afford to oblige her.

Mac began to get uneasy. Was there, after all, any saving in doing without a hired girl? Wouldn't that sort of economy bankrupt him in less than a year? He got a piece of paper and figured:—

| EXPENSES OF A WEEK WITHOUT HELP. | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|--------|
| Carpet ... | ... | ... | ... | £5 0 0 |
| Furniture | ... | ... | ... | 15 0 0 |
| Dress and jewellery | ... | ... | ... | 20 0 0 |
| Total | ... | ... | ... | 40 0 0 |
| Cost of help one week | ... | | | 15 0 |

Balance in favour of domestic £39 5 0

McGoochen was astonished. Grasping the paper and his hat, he made rapid strides for home. Opening the door, the first object that met his frenzied gaze was the general servant!

A Real Heroine.

ONCE in Bechuana, not long ago, there was a woman, a captive from another tribe, whose husband had gone forth to fight, and she went to see them return from the battle; and there came one holding up a spear to show they had been beaten, but he knew nothing of the fate of the man. And again another passed by, and he too had no news; but at last came one and told that he was dead. And she tore her hair, and threw herself on the ground and bewailed, and called on the wind to blow, that her sighs might be heard, and for the rain to cease, for her tears would water the ground. And she had two children left to her, a little girl of five, and an older boy about eight, and she consulted them, and said—

"I want to go back to my old place, I hear that those are come there who can make men wise" (the missionaries).

Children have a voice in Bechuana when very young, particularly the male child of a widowed mother. So when they consented, all three set forth together, carrying their few goods, and a little dry food of meal. It was a hard way, for they had to pass through the thick 'bush,' and places where it was known that the wild beasts abide.

"What should you do if you met any?" said Dr. Moffat to the narrators.

"Set fire to the grass if we could, and shout," was the answer.

Very small children will walk sometimes as much as twenty miles a day, but at length the two were quite tired out and could get no farther; and she set them down under a tree, and told them to rest while she went to look for water, so that they might make a fire and cook some pulse, and then go on again refreshed.

She was long away, and they grew frightened and hungry, and set off to look for her, crying "Ma," the word there also for mother, with one of their thirty-two pronouns added to it, as used by the little girl, and "Ma," with another pronoun, by the boy. But there was no answer, and the two little ones grew more and more restless, and went farther and farther afield, and were soon lost in the low bushes and scrub.

Presently back came the mother—and the old narrator enacted the scene as the negroes had given it, so that it seemed to pass before one's eyes—"She ran this way and then turned again to that side, and again went forward, throwing herself on the ground to see if she could find the print of their little feet, and calling to them with all her voice. But there was no reply. At length, madly rushing to and fro, she came out on a bare level plain beyond the bush, where there was no cover whatever, and there she saw her two little ones, hand in hand, going along forlornly and slowly, and some distance off a large lion walking quietly forward to meet them. The children took him for a great yellow calf, they told afterwards, and were not a bit frightened. She knew that if she called them, and made them run to her, the nature of the lion is immediately to pursue the flying, and he would be upon them in a second. She rushed forwards, therefore, at her utmost pace, and got between them and him. Then she called loudly, 'Lion, lion, lion! run and hide!' and the little ones set off as hard as they could, and concealed themselves among the bushes."

Meantime she went on facing the great beast, who was still walking leisurely forwards, probably much astonished to see any one who did not fly from his leadership. Then she began to abuse him with all the bad epithets in Bechuana (and it is very rich in them).

"You brute! you rascal! you bloodthirsty wretch! you slayer and robber of other folks' goods! You want to murder my children, you blood-sucker, you villain!" cried she.

She was now within thirty or forty feet of him, and she shook her fist in his face, and threw her arms over her head, and never ceased gesticulating and scolding, and raving and cursing.

The lion stood still, and swung his tail from side to side, backwards and forwards, always a sign that his wrath is rising (and the narrator imitated the heavy motion), and looked full at her. Presently, as she got hotter and hotter in her wrath, he shook the long tawny mane of his great big head, and still he looked full at her, and still she stormed on.

At length he lay down right opposite her, resting the mighty head upon his fore-paws; the heavy thud of the tail on the ground was heard, and still he never took his eyes off her, nor she off him. If

even for a moment she had left hold, as it were, with her eyes, she knew that at two bounds he would be upon her, and after her would have followed and devoured her children. At last he arose up again, and began once more to swing his tail backwards and forwards, but now a little undecidedly; and then, as she still held on with her vehement objurgations, he turned away from her tongue, and began to walk quietly off, wondering probably not a little, as having never been so out-faced by man, woman, or beast before.

She remained without stirring on the same spot (which must have been the most difficult effort of all), as she watched him gradually retreating farther and farther, growing less and less on the bare plain. Once he turned and looked back to see what she was about. If even then she had begun to move, it was all over with her and her children—he would have been after them like lightning; but she kept her ground till the mighty beast disappeared, quite in the distance, among some low sand-hills and prickly bushes. Then she set off, rejoined her children, and did not stop for food or rest, but hurried on till they reached her old tribe in safety—a magnanimous hero of a woman.

"It was not a pleasant position to be in, there in front of the lion—I know what it is!" added the old man, significantly.—"Lion Stories," by F. P. Verney.

Russia and Turkey.

THE following notes of the Russo-Turkish war of 1828 will doubtless prove interesting at the present time. The extract is from the "British Almanac" of 1829 and 1830:—

"April 26, 1828—Declaration of war by Russia against Turkey. May 7—The Emperor of Russia leaves St. Petersburg for the army. The troops of the 6th and 7th corps of infantry of the Russian army pass the Pruth at Skuljanah Faltschi and Vadului-Issaki in three columns. The Russian Colonel Loprand enters Jassy at the head of two squadrons of Uhlans. May 11—The fortress of Brahilow invested by the Russians. 12th—The Russian General Baron Geismar takes possession of Bucharest. 17th—Arrival of the Grand Duke Michael, younger brother of the Emperor Nicholas, at the head-quarters of the Russian army before Brahilow, to assume the chief command of the siege of that place. 20th—Arrival of the Emperor Nicholas in the Russian camp, at the village of Hadschi Capitan, near Brahilow. 26th—The regular troops of the Turkish army quit Constantinople under the command of Ali Pacha. June 8th—Passage of the Danube by the Russian advanced guard. The Russians make an attack from the river on Isatzka (Isaktschi), on the right bank of the Danube, which they take, and succeed in landing eight battalions of artillery. The Emperor followed on the 10th; in the course of that day and the 9th, the main army had crossed the river, and occupied the positions abandoned by the Turks. 9th—A Russian flotilla on the Danube destroys thirty-five Turkish vessels. By this success all communication between Brahilow and the right shore of the Danube was

effectually intercepted. 19th—After a bloody and unsuccessful attempt to take Brahilow by storm, a capitulation for the surrender of the fortress was concluded between the Grand Duke Michael, chief in command of the Russian besiegers, and Soliman Pacha, the Turkish commander of that place. 22nd—The Imans of Constantinople receive the Sultan's firman, calling to arms the whole of the population from the age of sixteen to sixty years. 23rd—After a siege of forty hours the Turkish garrison of Anapa, 3,000 strong, surrenders at discretion to the Russian admirals; eighty-five pieces of artillery fall into their hands. After a siege of seven hours the Russians occupy Hirsova; the garrison proceeds, part to Shumla, part to Silistria. July 20th—Attack on the eminences of Shumla, which, after an obstinate resistance, are occupied by the Russians. August 5th—The Emperor of Russia opens the siege of Varna. 7th—Vigorous sally by the Turkish garrison. Fourteen Turkish ships cut out of the port of Varna by the Russian longboats. 24th—A Turkish army of 30,000 men defeated under the walls of Akhalzik. 26th—The Russians abandon their positions in advance of Shumla. Sept. 9th—The fortress of Badjazet captured by the Russians. 26th—Engagement at Czoroi, the Turks completely routed in a night attack, with great loss of men and artillery, and driven back to Calafat. The Sultan leaves Constantinople with the Sacred Standard, for the headquarters of the Moslem army. Oct. 6—Navarino taken by the French. 15th—The Russians retreat from Shumla, and are attacked by an army of 8,000 Turks, who are repulsed. 26th—The Turks refusing the treaty of London, the three Powers recognize the independence of Greece. Calafat abandoned by the Turks, and occupied by the Russians. Nov. 8—The siege of Silistria by the Russians raised, the heavy artillery abandoned; Bulgaria, with the exception of Varna, evacuated by the Russians. Dec. 31—The Bosphorus declared in a state of blockade by the Russian Admiral Greig. May 17, 1829—The siege of Silistria commenced by the Russians. June—Rashova (Rasswa), on the right bank of the Danube, taken by the Russians. 11th—The Russians obtain a victory at Kulertscha, near Shumla. 18th—Surrender of Silistria to the Russians; the garrison of 8,000 men and 10,000 armed inhabitants to be prisoners of war. July 3—The Russians rout the army under the Seraskier of Erzeroum, and take the camp on the road to that town, with the Pacha, 1,500 prisoners, thirty pieces of cannon, and nine standards. 13th—Grand audience given by the Sultan to the British Ambassador in the Turkish camp on the plain of Buyukdere. 26th—The passage of the Balkan mountains completed by the Russian army. August 20th—Adrianople entered by the Russian army. September 14th—Treaty of peace signed between Russia and Turkey at Adrianople."

CURRAN was once asked by one of his brother judges, "Do you see anything ridiculous in this wig?" "Nothing but the head," was the reply.

THIS is the time when the rural lyceum organizes to find out whether the hen that laid the egg or the hen that hatched it is the mother of the chicken, and to decide other questions of vital importance.

The Egotist's Note-book.

THE final decision has been given by the Master of the Rolls in the Epping Forest case, awarding an injunction against the continuance of the fences on the waste lands belonging to the lords of the manors. Bush-wood and Lords Bushes, two of the most beautiful portions of the Forest, are among the places this decree will open, for people to go there gipsying once more, as they did "a long time ago."

The members of the London and Provincial Amalgamated Chimney Sweeps' Association have resolved to put down the Jack-in-the-Green exhibitions on May-day. They are not consistent with the dignity of the profession. Nevertheless, the day is, in accordance with ancient custom, to be observed as a holiday. Verily, this is the age of progress! But what is an amalgamated chimney-sweep?

There is dire confusion among the Judges. The Judicature Act has burned their hands. They not only don't know where they are, but what they are. A learned counsel the other day addressed Sir H. Hawkins as "Mr. Baron."

"He's no more 'Mr. Baron' than you are," remarked the Lord Chief Baron. "We are all simply Her Majesty's Judges."

"How shall I address his lordship?" asked the puzzled lawyer.

"Simply as Sir Henry Hawkins," responded the Judge.

But Sir Henry didn't like that, and more explanations followed. Now it is announced that a clause has been inserted in the new Judicature Act to get over the difficulty; but the Bench will never forgive the Legislature for mixing them all up together as it has done.

Members of the House of Commons—and some distinguished members, too—complain that the newspapers don't report them fully, and they wish to have an official report, in which they can correct their own speeches. This official record is not to minister to the vanity of members. Of course not; it is intended for the benefit of posterity. What sort of opinion would posterity form of a certain Home Rule member, who, it is affirmed, recently made forty-seven speeches in the course of a single night?

A law case, Norris *v.* Sadleir, which has occupied the Irish law courts and the House of Lords for upwards of twenty years, has just been brought to a close. Strange to say, there is still a sum of £4,000 left, which the Court has ordered to be divided between the two surviving creditors. Some bungling lawyer has made a mess of it, to allow such a nice little plum to slip through his fingers.

A nobleman, old but still a bachelor, having contemplated with complete satisfaction his personal appearance in the mirror before him, summoned his valet.

"Antoine, how have you managed to keep your hair so black? It's as dark as mine."

"Ah, sir, we don't like to see the world grow old about us. Time goes by too quickly. Yet, seeing that monsieur still kept young, I thought that I would preserve my youth also."

"Just so, Antoine; but we have been travelling, and we ought to appear in our true colours now."

The next day a lady friend called to see the duke, who looked younger than ever. She was admitted by Antoine, now white-headed and venerable in appearance.

"Why, duke, your journey has completely re-established you!"

"Yes, madam; it's only poor Antoine who has grown a little older."

The duke had reflected.

Coals are not to be any cheaper, so it is said; for to meet the reduction in price a smaller quantity is to be produced from the pits. Very nice for the miners, but very nasty for those who buy their coals by the hundred.

"What could have induced Miss Smyth to marry that old fellow? He's sixty, at least."

"I dare say she never thought about it. She's the most forgetful and most absent-minded creature in the world."

"Ah, I suppose when she becomes a widow she won't remember it until she begins to wear half-mourning."

However much Mr. Quekett may have been admired as a scientist, no one can approve of his name. I went to the conversazione of his society the other evening, and—was nearly stifled with spirit lamps. Glittering microscopes were spread over the tables, and to each was its lamp—certainly over a thousand, and the effect on the atmosphere when the galleries of the London University were crowded may be imagined. Apropos of microscopes, though, as they open out to us, so to speak, a new world, might not the borders of the search be extended? For instance, at one table would be six microscopes, and I gazed through them one by one, to see cheese-mites, butterfly-antennæ, diatomæ, foraminifera, infusoria and beetle-wing scale. At the next table the same objects would be seen in different order, and so on, and so on, *ad infinitum*; which reminds me that one scientific gentleman showed the truth of the lines about little fleas having little fleas to bite 'em, by exhibiting the parasite of a bee; while another—after, no doubt, great research and determination—not to be trammelled like the exhibitors of cheese-mites and diatomæ, displayed the section of a white rat's tail. It was very pretty, but one could not help saying, *cui bono?*

A poor fellow has been sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment at the Middlesex Sessions, for the trivial offence of breaking seventy pounds' worth of plate glass windows. On being called upon for his defence, he told the judge that he had a great dislike to big windows, so he had broken them; but it was of no use—fate and the law were

against him, and he was sent to prison. Poor man! there will be no large windows at the House of Correction to annoy him; for the panes are very small, and well barred. That is one consolation. But things are coming to a pretty pass in this land of liberty, if we may not break a few panes of glass when we like. We shall have to revolt.

Messrs. Sparkes Hall and Co., of Regent-street, have just introduced a novelty in the shape of a lawn tennis shoe, which, in addition to being beautifully made, possesses two important essentials—viz., imperviousness to damp, and the prevention of slipping. These are ingeniously accomplished by a perforated India rubber sole. The lawn tennis shoe will undoubtedly find very great favour amongst the votaries of this fashionable game.

A specimen of genuine avarice:—

A rich old miser was attended by a widow, who had been in his service for eighteen years. One day she fell down and broke her arm, and was unable to do anything for several weeks. When she returned to her work, her generous master said to her—

"See, you have not been able to earn anything, but I will pay for your food during the time you were ill. How long were you laid up?"

"Thirty-eight days, sir."

"No, you are wrong. It was only thirty-seven days. Remember, you had your breakfast before the accident happened, and you couldn't eat any dinner after it was done."

Theatrical manager to aspiring young author:—

"My dear sir, so long as your tragedy is unacted, you can always declare it to be a masterpiece. People would rather take your word for it than read your play."

A story from Constantinople:—

"You don't invite X. now," said a lady to her friend, in reference to a well-known *bric-à-brac* merchant.

"No, I don't. Just imagine—he used to collect all the corks, and put them in his pocket."

"Perhaps that was only a little weakness of his."

"If it had been so, I wouldn't have minded; but my husband found out that he sold all the stamped corks to people who received often, and wished to make their guests believe that they gave good wine."

THE morality of the business world may be considered at a very low ebb, when almost directly a new article has been introduced, and is by universal consent considered a success, worthless imitations of it appear. These imitators trade upon the reputation gained by the original invention, and if not narrowly watched bring it into bad repute. Imitations are in existence of the "New Patent Stocking Suspender," the only safeguard being the name of Almond stamped on every clasp and on the band. Every lady desiring health and comfort should provide herself with a pair of these useful articles, which may be obtained of Mr. H. J. Almond, 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, E.C. Ladies' size, post free, 3s. 2d. per pair. Size of waist required.

May 12, 1877
NEW YORK

A LEAF OF GOLD.

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A Leaf of Gold.

CHAPTER II.

THIS is certainly the happiest day of my life.

Grace is to marry my darling brother Arthur, and I am so rejoiced I do not rightly know what to do.

I have left them to talk over their future plans and prospects, and have wandered away to the wood, to find the mossiest and coolest place where I may have a good long think.

Although I have seen Grace and Arthur every day for the last two years, yet their engagement has filled me with astonishment as well as joy. They love each other very much I am sure, but it will be really difficult to look upon them as lovers. Arthur is so quiet and so good, I could never imagine him making love to any one; but then Grace herself is never very demonstrative (except when she is angry with you), and she has always liked and respected Arthur very much.

Sometimes I have doubted that quiet manner of hers, for her heart is so warm and full, and to-day there was such a light in her eyes as she met Arthur in the rose alley. Love sometimes works wonderful changes in people, and who knows but that Grace may become quite a gay, impulsive young matron under the spell of the enchanter. I laugh aloud at my own thoughts.

Dear, dear Grace, I would not really change you, although you should scold me every hour of the day, and burn all my tales and poetry as useless rubbish.

I had once planned, and that not so long ago, to be Arthur's helpmeet all my life, to devote myself as much as possible to the manifold parish labours that pretty well fill up his life; but now Grace will take my place, and release me from these useful but uncongenial duties.

In reviewing much of my past life, I do not feel proud of my endeavours to be useful to my darling. I am afraid I have worried and wearied him often enough with my complaints and grumblings, and have added to, instead of detracted from, his many cares and responsibilities.

I have often tried to take interest in all kinds of things and people that vexed me really almost to death. I have attended meetings, and sewed, and read, and taught as much as was ever expected of me; but the spirit has been unwilling all the time, and a rebellious, disagreeable frame of mind often spoils the good deed. To-day I will be just. I will not overlook these bad feelings, and persuade myself that I have been a wise, kind, and helpful sister to the most perfect brother in the world. That is all over now; Grace will take my place, and I shall retire, willingly and thankfully, into the background. Grace shall have my Sunday-school class, and try her civilizing power upon Jim Benson. Poor Jim, he little dreams of the discipline in store for him.

Jim is the laziest, merriest, wickedest boy in Weldon.

His years are few, perhaps eleven in all; but his pranks and shortcomings would not disgrace a reprobate twice his age. Never a Sunday passes but Jim and I have an awful battle, metaphorically speaking, and he invariably comes off victor; and

somehow my heart is in love with Jim's untameable nature, and love of the fresh fields; and I so hate myself to be condemned to pass the lovely afternoons in a musty, shut-up school-room, and the temptation to play the truant (if I had the chance) would be so great, that for the life of me I cannot help feeling sympathy for Jim, and the rogue knows it, and relies upon my weakness to escape his just punishment.

Arthur would not have school in the summer-time if he could help it; but indeed, poor boy, he cannot do everything he likes, there are so many people he has to please.

Grace will help him in everything. It is wonderful the power she has over the people, both rich and poor, and yet you never hear an unkind word from her lips.

She reminds me of Una in the "Faerie Queene," or, as I have said before, of a calm and saintly Madonna.

How strange it will be at first to look upon her as Arthur's wife, and yet I am so happy, so glad. I have no jealous feeling in thinking of Grace as dearer to Arthur than I have ever been, no pain in knowing that she will take my place, and fill it with a new and graceful dignity.

I rejoice in thinking that I shall again be free to follow out my own ideas of life and happiness. Mamma loved Grace very much. Arthur was at college in those days, and I was quite a little girl. I know she would have been very happy to have thought Grace would fill her place. I wonder if she does know. I wonder if Heaven is very far beyond that deep blue, if, indeed, it is anywhere; but I know it is. I know my mother lives—why should I talk so wickedly? Have I not seen her in my dreams, sitting in her own little rocking chair, with father's hand clasped in hers, watching the little feathery clouds as they sailed along the sapphire sea of the sky; just as she used to sit in the old days while Bruce and Arthur drew me in my little basket carriage over the lawn, or played at their rough boyish games under the linden?

Oh, never let me lose my faith in this, in the home into which she has entered, that sweet home of which she murmured in her dying moments, the glimpses of whose brightness left a smile of unspeakable ecstasy upon her fading lips.

And if my mother exists—as I feel she does—her conscious, loving, individual self (and no winged myth in an impossible abode of bliss), then I know that she will be very happy to know of her children's happiness; for, in spite of all that Arthur or any other religious clergyman may say, I do not believe any one can be happy in Heaven while loved ones on earth are sorrowing and unhappy.

Grace talks of calling upon Maud Rutherford tomorrow, and wants me to accompany her.

Maud lives at the Hall, and is her cousin.

I do not like her; she is so beautiful, and haughty, and reserved.

She dresses like a princess, and is very wealthy; therefore she has plenty of friends to admire her, and I suppose she must have some pretensions to good looks, or Bruce would not have said— But I will not say what Bruce did. I do not like her, and will not think of her again.

And that reminds me, what has become of Bruce ? It is nearly three weeks since I sprained my ankle in jumping off Grace's apple tree ; and, except for one short visit, I have not seen him since that evening.

Surely he would not have returned to town without calling to say good-bye, and if he were ill Arthur would have heard of it.

I like Bruce Damer very much, nearly as much as I like Grace ; and even Arthur's engagement does not seem quite a settled thing without Bruce here to share my delight.

How beautiful Grace looked this morning as she came in from the garden, with that sweet flush on her face and the half-opened rose cluster in her hair ; and how proud and glad Arthur spoke, with his arm round my waist, the other hand closed over her drooping fingers.

"Two to love and take care of you henceforth, dear Isabel—a sister as well as a brother."

"Thank you, dear, dear Arthur, a thousand times for such a sister as Grace Liston."

This reply is what I ought to have made ; but my real answer was very different. I hope I did not behave too childishly. I remember flying to Grace, and kissing her in an ecstasy of delight ; but of all the eager, excited talk that followed I have no recollection. Grace stayed to lunch with us ; after which Arthur proposed to leave her at Rose Cottage on his way to the Hall.

Lunch over, I thought they must wish to be alone a little, to talk over a thousand happy things, so I managed somehow to slip away unnoticed.

Luckily I found my hat on the hall table, and quickly made my way through the churchyard and lane into the wood, and here I am, lying full length at the mossy foot of the same old tree where Grace and I in the years gone by found the first violets ; and the little babbling stream, whose noise we were wont to drown by our own shrill, happy laughter, reaches me as sweetest summer music.

Who will be Gracie's bridesmaids, I wonder ?

Olive and Christine Fairfax, and Florence Damer ; Maud Rutherford of course. And Mrs. Damer, with her silly affectations, will come to the breakfast, and the squire and Miss Weldon, and Bruce and Leon, and John, and perhaps the two Charltons from the Hill Farm.

I begin to wonder how we shall accommodate so many people, and then remember suddenly that Grace may possibly prefer to have her wedding party at her own house. The idea of crowding even ten or twelve people round Gracie's little dining-room table is absurd enough, and I dismiss it at once from my mind.

It must be a private wedding, after all. The sunlight flickers through the waving green leaves to play upon my white cotton dress, and the little ants and spiders run over the golden shadows, and among the fallen leaves and twigs, as I picture the beautiful form of Grace attired in her bridal robes, and kneeling before the richly stained-glass window, consecrated to the memory of Bruce's mother, that is the one great beauty of our little church.

She must be dressed in white silk or satin, and on her dark brown hair she shall wear a wreath of orange blossoms gathered freshly for her, and over these

mamma's own wedding veil of wonderful Chantilly lace—so fine and yet so rich is it, so old and yet so new, that I have ever regarded it as a sacred thing, destined to bring joy and happiness to her who wears it.

And the pearl bracelets and the turquoise pendant that were mamma's too—well, Grace shall have them all. They shall be my wedding present to her.

And she shall be the happiest bride in the world, if love and beauty can make her so.

If Arthur goes to the Hall he may see Bruce, or at all events hear what has become of him.

How my thoughts will turn to Bruce as a centre !

It is quite absurd. Old friends do not generally think so much about each other when they are absent.

I wonder how Bruce would feel if he heard I was going to be married ?

I should feel sorry if he— Well, suppose Bruce were to marry, it wouldn't make the least difference to me—not the least in the world.

The thought is not exactly pleasant, nevertheless. I bury my hands deeper in the mossy grass, and watch the bright tints of the waving boughs near my head with an indefinable sadness.

Bruce Damer is nothing to me. I am only a foolish, sentimental girl, who has but so far "fed 'mong the roses, and lain in the lilies of life."

I know nothing of the wide world and all its cares and dangers ; nothing of the bright, pleasurable London life that Bruce sometimes shows me glimpses of ; nothing of the thousand and one things that go to make up the sum of his daily life. I am not conscious even of the state of my own heart.

I cannot analyze its feelings ; I know not how rich or poor it is in those transcendent qualities that all hearts are supposed to possess in abundance ; yet I feel very sad, and slightly miserable at Bruce's long absence ; and sometimes I am tempted to believe that I did not hear him call to me that evening when I lay fainting on the grass of Grace's lawn, that he did not kiss me, or tell me how truly and passionately he loved me, that it was all a dream, a trick of my imagination, and there was no reality in it at all. When I try to think this, I only realize how intensely true and real those words and caresses were. They live down in my heart for ever.

Death cannot rob me of them. Did Bruce know I heard him ? I should like to be sure of that ; but when I think of the events of that evening, I am sadly perplexed. Bruce became all at once so grave and quiet. If he had suddenly repented his wild words I could have better understood it, but I do not think he did ; for after I was lifted into the pony carriage, when Grace had gone into the cottage for something she had forgotten, he came to the side of the carriage and spoke such tender, loving words of sorrow for the pain I was suffering, and he took my hand in his, and begged so hard for the jessamine spray in my dress, and when I gave him leave to have it his fingers trembled as he loosened it from my breast, and his eyes were all wet and shining ; I could not look into them, but dropped my head in silence, and so was driven slowly away. And the whole sky was a glory as we faced the west, and the air I breathed seemed the air of a supreme heaven of love. Every flower bloomed for me that night, and

every bird and insect shared my happiness. I leaned my head on Grace's shoulder when the soft half-moon appeared in the still, lavender sky, and wept for joy because of the beauty about me and my heart's deep happiness.

And in my little bed that night I buried my face in the patchwork silken coverlid that dear mamma made for me in her early, happy married life, and thanked God for the treasure of Bruce's love, and prayed I might be worthy of it; and in the morning found that my tears had faded somewhat a little square bit of mamma's wedding dress, the only bit in my coverlid, the centre and the star of that work of love and artistic beauty; and so hailed it as a bright and happy omen.

Then I saw him no more until he called one evening with Maud, and that is at least a fortnight ago.

Hark! Surely I heard some one down by the brook.

It is very like Bruce whistling "When all was young." Whoever it is, I can see him, while he cannot see me. But if it should be Bruce, the fact that I am hidden from him will be no pleasure to me.

I hold by the low boughs of the tree, and peer through the tangled bushes and saplings that fringe the miniature precipice cut by the stream.

Something tells me it is Bruce before I see the top of his well-known straw hat, still garlanded with the identical blue ribbon I put round it for the University boat race.

The tread of his firm feet is sweetest music to my ears, and I watch him with an absorbed interest when he switches off the tender summer shoots with his light cane, or hurls fragments of stone and rock far down the water. I am just about to call "Bruce, Bruce," when he suddenly leaps a little wooden fence, and hastens to join a lady who is sitting sketching, or reading, or in some way employed where the wood dips into the Hall pasture. Presently I see them both quite plainly.

It is Maud Rutherford, and she is laughing gaily at some jest of Bruce's. They disappear together among the trees, and then I hear the gate bang sul lenly to, and they are gone.

When I reach home again, I find the house silent and empty.

Arthur has not returned from the Hall, nor has he left me a message. For the first time in my life I feel lonely and forgotten.

Nancy and Ann, our two servant maids, are picking fruit for preserving in the kitchen garden. Once or twice, as the sound of their laughter reaches me, I maliciously show myself from the front lawn, and abruptly put an end to their levity.

I am thoroughly cross myself, and consequently all mirth is hateful to me. I shut the window down with a bang, and break off a lovely damask rose by catching it in the sill. I exclude all the sunlight, save one golden ray that will not be driven out, and then, completely miserable, sit down to my lonely afternoon tea.

On the sofa is Grace's lace-edged pocket handkerchief, and Arthur's last new theological pamphlet. I confiscate the former, and take up the latter to read over my tea.

But the "Signs of the Times" is too much for me.

I do not believe that the world is so old and depraved and wicked—to me it would be so full of kindness and hope and beauty if only Bruce would explain the meaning of this long, cold silence.

I lay the tract upon the table, and push my untouched tea and cake away from me. Then I get up and leave the room. Across the cool paved hall, through the dining-room, to Arthur's study. This is the soberest room in the house; it is devoted to study and reflection, and therefore suits the gravity of my mood better than any other just now.

How deliciously cool it is. Indian matting on the floor; palm-leaf fans on the mantelpiece; delicately painted walls, with little sketches upon them in water-colour, enclosed in gold frames, that give just enough life and brilliancy to the prevailing sober greyish tints about the place.

A writing-table and easy-chair are the two most conspicuous things in the room, and the pretty falling curtains of pale green silk, tender in hue as the light that plays round the head of a mermaid, were put up by mother's tasteful hands twenty-seven years ago, when first she came here a bride.

There, too, are the books lying still and solemn on the shelves.

The books that enjoy life in the way of tossings and tumblings, turned-down leaves, marked pages, and loose covers, are in the library, and plenty of fun they have. A mixed company are they, with no restraint on them. They lie about without any regard to position or caste.

A perky novelette nestles familiarly by the "Great Norman Empire," and gains weight and dignity, I doubt not, in its own estimation, by so close a proximity to a neighbour so renowned for learning and veracity.

Only the other morning, I rescued "Robinson Crusoe" from being completely smothered by the caresses of half a dozen admirers, who had fallen bodily upon him.

But the books in the study would be shocked to even hear of such proceedings.

Not one of them is ever out of place. You never would by any chance discover them lounging across the shelves, half supported by their neighbours, and looking as though they took things easily. Existence must be a serious thing to these books—so much dignity to preserve, so much respect to enforce, and a never-failing lesson to teach of the solidness and weight of theological arguments.

I don't wonder Arthur gets the headache if he reads much here. They certainly give this room a very learned air; but I will bring a dish of roses in to-morrow morning, so that Arthur shall at all events have something better to smell than these heavy bindings in calf and leather. I lift out one of the books, and put it carefully back. It is all strange to me; and although it is written in my mother-tongue, it might as well be in Greek for all I can understand of its lifeless logic.

I wonder if the old church fathers ever read their own productions now, the books they wrote when on earth, and what they think of them if they do, after so long a lapse of time. I like best to read bits of these ancient authors in modern essays or criticism; they catch then from their surroundings a certain

freshness and piquancy that mixes well with the mustiness of ages.

I close the door gently upon the study and its occupants, and re-enter the dining-room.

How careless of Arthur to leave the piano open, and the music actually on the floor!

I love music passionately. When Bruce and I used to sing together in this half-light— But I will not think of Bruce; it is weeks since I touched the piano. I will practise a little.

I run my fingers over the keys; but I hark back always to the same old melody, Bruce's favourite that he was whistling to-day in the wood.

That song haunts me continually; and as I play and sing it, with all the grief and love and despair of my own mood upon me, it enters into my very soul, and becomes a part of my love's very existence. I never know in such cases of intense feeling whether the fulness of memories awakened by the magic power of sound is pleasant or painful. It is an impulse which seizes one, and so carries them into its own dim and glorious soul world.

When Bruce sang to me in this fading light of the Leaf of Gold that should be the promise of fuller and richer joys, it seemed as though he only spoke and sang to me; and my spirit became lifted up into a region that was not of earth, and, like Paul, I seemed to see and hear unspeakable things. But I have no words to describe such states of mind. I can only know and feel them.

How tired I am; how I wish Arthur would return and talk to me a great deal about Grace, and let me lean my head on his shoulder, and feel his dear hands smoothing away all the pain from my aching head.

A thought strikes me. It is Thursday evening, and the schoolmaster practises for an hour or two on the church organ, and he is generally alone.

He is a fine musician and we are very good friends, and I know he will be pleased to have me for a listener.

A Night Surprise.

MANY years ago I obtained leave from my ship, on the Indian coast, to visit a friend who was with his regiment.

I was received with open arms by my friend Fraser, who gave me for my own use one of the best horses the regiment furnished, and told me that we were in a perfect paradise of game, and that I should have my fill of sport.

"You do ride?" he said.

"Well, I stick on a horse."

"We'll begin with an elephant or two, then. The rajah will get us up a shooting bout after tigers."

I was quite willing, and a day or two after the preliminaries had been arranged we started.

In India the tiger is king of the jungle. To shoot him, all else must be abandoned—he is the sole game of the day. Not a shot must be fired—antelopes, sambur, nylghie, boar—all must pass unmolested. The weariness of hours of beating, watching, halting, must all be endured day by day without repining. There is always the excitement of knowing that at any instant the yielding rushes and

waving reeds may glow with the fire of his eye and warm with the rich colour of his presence. There is comparative security in a howdah, but it is only comparative, for the occupant is by no means beyond the reach of the terrible spring; and the tiger, wounded or not, will leap at any obstacle to his path when he desires to reach his haunts. The mahout is always in danger, so is the sportsman on the pad, or "guddee," as it is called here. At all events, in this region there is no alternative. It would be impossible to walk a yard on foot in such jungle as that of which this place consisted, and there are no favoured resorts at this time of year where the hunter can sit on a platform in a tree over a pool, to watch the animal coming to drink at night.

On our second day out, there was a great sloth bear sunning herself in the jungle, which started off with a scrambling run when the elephant came upon its retreat. A quick shot from Fraser killed it; and when the hunters went up to the body they found that there were two cubs, each about the size of a full-grown pug, gambolling about their dam, as unconscious as herself of the cause of her sudden quiet. As soon as they found that the strange beings who had pounced upon them were about to separate them from their mother, they charged fiercely, and snapped with their snow-white little milk-tuskers at their captors, who had no easy work to secure them. They would not go away from the body, and at last they were secured and fastened on a pad elephant, uttering piteous cries. As soon, however, as the carcase of the old bear was hoisted upon the elephant, they stilled their voice of lamentation, and seemed to be quite content. They were put into a deal box on arriving at our camp that night, and ate a dish of bread and milk without very much pressing.

In one swamp, the reeds and grass were so high as to rise above the heads of those in the howdahs—say eighteen feet to twenty feet, for the howdah rests on mattresses, &c., upwards of a foot thick, and the head of the shooter, who stands upright in front on the floor of the howdah, is certainly seventeen feet above the ground. This was pronounced to be just the place for tigers, but to get at them was a very great problem. Except for the elephants, no man could go into such a place at all, and at times even elephants were hard set to burst through the reedy barriers; but elephants are apt to lose their presence of mind and dignity of deportment when they come upon tigers in a swamp, and the tigers, sooner than face the open, will charge elephants and their riders without hesitation.

Suddenly a deer was seen leaping high, in buck jumps, and evidently pursued by some animal hidden in the lower depths of the grass. In an instant afterwards there was a sharp cry of pain, suffocated at once in a gurgling noise, which told the fate of the parah. The line pressed on, and close to the spot where the deer leaped past there lay a tiger, which had just pulled down the deer, and had not been deterred in the excitement of the chase from its pursuit by the noise of those who were compassing its own destruction. It was soon roused to a sense of its danger, however, and made a dash towards the centre of the covert, which for want of a better word shall be called jungle, though the

term should in strictness be applied to wood or forest only. It is not easy to determine what happens on such an occasion. Every one who sees has a shot at the beast.

At all events, the tigress lay down, with a few heaves of her striped sides and a growl, which died into a moan, rolled over, and lay stark but not stiff, showing her fangs in her snarling mouth, indomitable in rage, hit through shoulder, head, and back; and then the tremor of the elephants was explained, for with their mother just a few minutes before were purring and playing three little tigers, some six weeks old, which were running about in the covert when the beaters came down, and set the cautious elephant on the alert.

What is to become of the miserable, bereaved tigerlets? It is held that they are too young to help themselves. Their father, it is supposed, will have nothing to do with them—in fact, he will be very angry if they come near him. If they were old enough to follow him, they might be allowed to pick up the fragments of his feasting, and dispute the *disjecta membra* with jackals, wolves, and vultures; but he will not look after them, or teach their young ideas how to hunt. There is just the chance that he will come to the same place to-morrow, to look after his luckless mate, and that he and his offspring may be added to the game list.

The deer that the tigress intended for her dinner was discovered near the place whence the tigress started forth in her effort to escape, its neck broken, and its flanks rent with one stroke of those claws which now any one could feel with impunity. I confess that but for the cruel nature of the beast, which is the type of ferocity and cruelty in the animal kingdom, I could feel something like compassion for the beautiful creature which was laid out on the sward in the perfection of symmetry and strength, slain, but not conquered, by man.

The word was given to advance, and in a few seconds more the elephants, some trumpeting loudly, had plunged into a swampy wilderness, in which they were lost to sight as completely as if they had been swallowed up in the sea; and then there arose a noise like that hissing of a long rolling surf on the shingles of a sea beach which is heard in a calm after a storm. This noise was made by the elephants advancing through the grass and rushes. It was not like the sound that is made when they are breaking through dry reeds or bursting through brushwood. Then there is a crepitant and crackling, mingled with sharp reports and crashing tumult. Here the elephant, walking in two or three feet of water, out of which springs this wonderful wealth of tapering stems twenty feet high and more, tufted with feathery spray, is resolved not to get into a hole if he can help it; and so, as he advances, he thrusts his proboscis in front of him low down, close to the level of the water, and then sways it from right to left and from left to right with the regularity of a pendulum, laying low the whole vast green wall with a curious swish, as of some mighty scythe.

For some fifteen or twenty minutes we advanced, deployed in line, across the swamp, each man hearing his neighbour, but rarely seeing him, the line being directed by fuglemen, whose loud cries rose

above the storm raised by the elephants. Suddenly there is a roar, which those who have visited the Zoological Gardens at feeding-time ascribe to one of the largest carnivora in urgent want of a meal. It is repeated. There comes out a great Babel from the heart of the swamp.

"It is a guddee elephant that has gone down in a hole, that's all."

The pad elephant was got out, and gradually the swamp shallowed. The reeds, instead of being four or five feet above our heads, abate their predominance. Bitterns of rich orange and russet-red plumage spring up in front of us, and many sorts of little reed birds, which seem scarcely able to fly, and never rise above the tops of the long grasses, twitter about before the elephants, and creep round the reeds like tiny woodpeckers, and disappear; cormorants or birds exactly like the shag as they fly, but not much larger than grouse, circle overhead, and the ever-vigilant horned plover utters his quaint cry. But who cares for these things, or even for the throb which the heart gives perforce as the elephant, with upraised proboscis, swerves to one side with a note of alarm as soon as the Sikh shikaree utters the word "pig," or "deer"—anything but "tiger"?

With the exception of the bear and tigress, our hunt was rather a failure. However, I was to have more sport yet.

I had been with Fraser about a fortnight, when one morning the inhabitants of a neighbouring village came to beg my friend's assistance.

"What is it you want?" he asked.

Their reply was that he should go and kill a tiger that had carried off a man on the previous night.

I may as well premise that the tiger rarely attacks a man, for he is a great coward; but if he has once seized child, woman, or man, he becomes terribly dangerous—a man-eater, in fact, for he cares for no other flesh, and amuses himself by going night after night to the village where he seized his first victim, and pounces upon the first unhappy creature who comes within reach of his talons.

It becomes necessary, then, to slay the monster as soon as possible; hence the visit of the villagers to Fraser, whose fame as a sportsman was great throughout the land.

An hour after receiving the news we were off.

There were no elephants and beaters this time; but horses were mounted, Fraser being upon a clever Irish cob, which he called Bobby, and your humble servant upon a nasty-tempered Arab.

We had for following, Fraser's man, Harris, my Indian domestic, and four Sepoys—one a Mahratta, named Zopaul, a fellow of known bravery and accustomed to tiger hunting.

That evening we slept in the village, at the house of the head man. Our horses were secured behind the house where we slept, and a sentinel placed at the door, another being stationed before the house of the young man who had been carried off the night before, so as to give warning in case of the tiger's return.

The Indian nights in May are frightful, the heat being insupportable. I could not sleep, and the idea

that the tiger might be roaming about the place made me feel anything but comfortable.

At last I could bear it no longer, and I got up from where we lay upon the ground, as silently as possible, so as not to wake Fraser, who slept profoundly.

I opened the door, and, on looking out, I found that our sentry had followed the example of his chief, and judging from the appearance of the moon, which, seen over the shoulder of the mountain, shed a pale twilight over the tall palms and wretched huts of the village, I supposed it to be somewhere about midnight.

The main street of the village ran down towards a rivulet, where there was a nullah, and beyond this the jungle commenced, looking dark on the mountain side.

I was beginning to breathe a little more freely, when I heard the horses begin to snort, and stamp upon the ground.

Feeling that there must be some danger near, I began to look about me, and presently saw something glistening between two of the huts.

I thought it was a piece of glass; but, to my surprise, saw directly after that there were two, and moving rapidly, so that, directly after they were in the middle of the village street, in the shadow of one of the huts.

Suddenly they stopped short, and began to roll; and then I saw that what I had taken for glass were two fierce eyes, staring me full in the face.

It was the tiger.

Without pausing to think, I seized the musket of the sleeping sentinel, and fired right between the two brilliant emeralds that seemed gazing at me.

The noise as that shot was fired became on the instant deafening; for the sentinel, being awakened, began to howl with terror on seeing the glare of the tiger, which now uttered a deep-toned roar, like the bass pipe of an organ. The other Sepoys rushed out of their huts, helter-skelter, in the darkness; the horses broke loose, neighing with terror, and galloped off; the inhabitants of the village began to lament, while their women shrieked; and, to crown all, Fraser came running out, gun in hand, shouting to me to know what was the matter.

As for me, I could not speak, for all had happened so rapidly. I heard the outcries, then felt an awful shock which sent me, sprawling and half stunned, upon my face; the cries of the Sepoy seemed to be redoubled, and, as I was scratched, pinched and half suffocated, I struck out with my fists at random.

Directly after, I heard shots fired quite close by me—the fierce growlings of the tiger changing to cries and snarls of pain and rage; there was an awful sound of breaking bones, and I was nearly drowned in blood; the cries of the Sepoy ceased, and all became silent, leaving me stunned and helpless, too much overcome to comprehend the horrors that had taken place around me.

At last I staggered up, bruised and bleeding, and began to comprehend that the tiger had sprung and seized the sentry, dashing him down upon me, so that he lay right across my loins. Fraser, who had seized his gun, had then fired at the monster, wounding him severely, but not so badly that he could

not carry off the unfortunate Sepoy; for this he had done.

I must own that, besides feeling a terrible sensation of dread on finding myself pinned to the earth by the weight of the Sepoy and the tiger, I was horribly ashamed of having missed my aim, and it was in vain that I told myself that the Sepoy's musket was not so true as the rifle Fraser had lent me; for I had behaved badly—I had failed for want of coolness, and taken a hasty and a bad aim.

Fraser was furious with me, and read me a severe lesson on the hasty way in which I had fired.

"You must be cool and wary," he said, in conclusion. "If you go on at this rate, in a week you will be a dead man."

He was not speaking as the friend, but as the sportsman. He scolded me at his ease as we went in pursuit of the tiger on foot, our horses having gone off, as I have said.

We traversed the nullah, examining carefully the traces left by the tiger, and the marks of the poor Sepoy's legs as the beast trailed the man after him.

After a long march of more than two hours, and just as the sun was rising, we found half of the dead body of the Sepoy, and sent it back to the village in charge of two of the Indians, who had followed us in a crowd.

Hour after hour did we search for the monster, tracking him step by step, now up the mountain-side, now down in the wood.

At last we seemed to be nearing him; and just then an Indian announced that he had seen the tiger, and soon after pointed him out entering a wood, dragging his long tail low down behind him.

Fraser then divided our forces, placing me on his right, and Zopaul, with several of the Indians, he made take another direction.

The wood was composed of bamboos and palms, mingled with a kind of cactus, the whole forming a dense thicket so dark as to be quite obscure.

Five minutes showed us that our arms were of no use, for we should never approach the tiger; so Fraser shouted to me to come back.

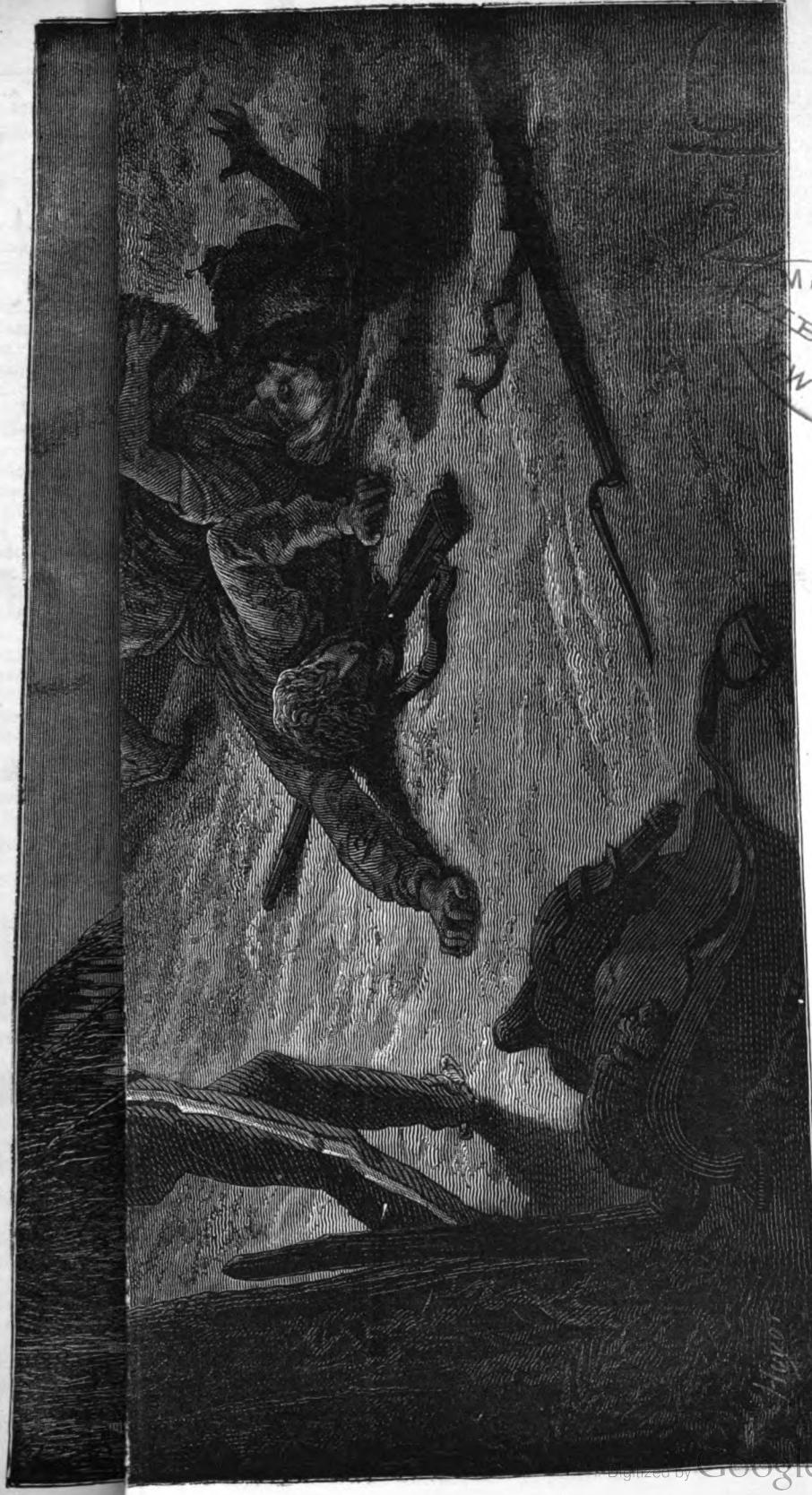
I passed the word, and we all crept out of the jungle, which Fraser determined to set on fire.

Ten minutes later the dry grass and bamboos were crackling loudly, the birds shrieked and flew, while several serpents glided out close by where we stood; for we were all collected together under the wind, where we expected the tiger would sneak out of the burning wood.

We waited patiently, as the fire crackled and roared, and soon we heard a series of savage roars, and from out of the smoke and noise the tiger made his appearance.

With a few bounds he was before us, his eyes rolling, his ears flat upon his broad head, his tongue licking his great white teeth, and his long, lithe tail lashing his sides, along the white fur of one of which was the bloody trace of a ball, now nearly black, but showing that Fraser's shot had been more effectual than mine on the previous night.

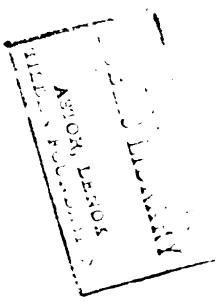
As soon as they saw the furious beast before them, every Indian threw down lance, gun, or club to lighten himself, and ran for his life. The Sepoys, however, stood firm.



"CAME RUNNING OUT, GUN IN HAND."—(Page 142.)

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This retreat decided the tiger, who, avoiding us who stood firm, dashed after the fugitives.

In an instant Fraser brought his rifle to bear, sent a ball into the beast, and made it stop short, turning half-round to face us, and swearing like a huge cat.

Up to that moment I had quite forgotten that I had a gun in my hand, and, now awaking to the fact, I stood with my heart beating heavily within my breast as I took a careful aim at the monster, sighting his right shoulder, and having, when I fired, the satisfaction to see the tiger roll right over.

Unfortunately he was not dead, for he regained his feet, and was about to retreat, when Zopaul walked coolly up to him, placed his piece against his ear, and fired, with the effect that the beast fell over crisp, straightened himself out, and lay dead.

The loud hurrah we set up brought back the Indians, who, under Zopaul's directions, proceeded to skin the beast. He was very strong and stout, measuring nine feet in length, and four feet high at the shoulder. I have seen bigger tigers, but never since so savage-looking an animal.

Fraser complimented me finely upon my coolness, telling me I had redeemed my character; and we returned to the village in triumph, to be treated as the destroyers of the man-eater; and, our horses being recovered, we made our way back to the camp, very well satisfied with our fortune in destroying a scourge, although our triumph was embittered, as it had been, by the loss of one of our men.

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—RISKY TIMES.

PATSEY was busy over her work outside the ranch; Jerry Blackburn was down in the pasture land with the cattle; and little Freddie had gone off with his tiny rifle to practise, while Ruth was as busy as their little maid getting something ready for Si's supper when he should return.

The little glen looked the very perfection of peace, and Patsey was singing away like a bird when Freddie hailed her with a well-known cry.

"Here's Master Si coming," said Patsey, aloud.

"What?" cried Ruth, hurrying out and looking pale.

"He's coming back; little Freddie gave me the signal."

"Then there's something wrong," cried Ruth, turning her eager eyes in the direction of the gap through which her husband would come.

"Lor! how you do fret yourself," cried Patsey, laughing. "There isn't nothing wrong. Here he is."

Patsey changed her mind for the moment as she caught sight of Si's face; but it smoothed directly, and he was all smiles as he embraced his wife.

"Why, Si, yew're soon back," said Ruth. "What about the sale?"

"I was just in time to see it sold," said Si, smiling.

"What, our ranch?"

"Yes; it's bought over our heads."

"Oh, master," exclaimed Patsey, unconsciously moving one of the causes of its being purchased.

For she had half a dozen great lumps of silver ore upon the table where she was ironing, and she changed the position of one weight on to another fluttering article of female attire, which but for the lump of ore would have been borne away by the breeze.

"Yes, oh, master," said Si, who was determined not to alarm his wife by any allusion to the Vasquez party. "Who do you think is the buyer, Rewth, lass?"

"Buyer? Why, Si, yew've never let any stranger buy it."

"Wal, no," he said, "taint a stranger. It's some one you know."

"Dew tell!" she exclaimed. "I'm no hand at guessing."

"Wal," he said, "it's jest Mr. Wallace Foster."

"What out here?"

"Yes, he's out here, and Miss Kate, too."

"My Miss Kate?" cried Ruth, flushing with pleasure.

"Yes, your Miss Kate and her father."

"And you've seen them, Si?"

"Yes, I've seen them, and they're coming here."

"My!" ejaculated Patsey, turning white and red in turn, before bending down over her work, and turning her face away from Si and his wife. "I shall never be able to do the work if they aint brought help," she said, in a smart, sharp tone of voice.

"Oh, they've brought no help," said Si. "We shall manage, though."

Poor Patsey's face turned blank and white as she heard those words, for the thought had flashed through her mind that Mickey might be with his old master; and then she acknowledged to herself, with a sigh, that it was a foolish idea, and not worthy of notice.

"Well, and they're coming here?" said Ruth.

"I've asked them to come and stay, for Mr. Wallace has bought the ranch."

"But I don't understand it," said Ruth.

"No more do I," said Si; "only there it is, and he's coming to explain. He's a fine young fellow, though, and it will be all right, you may depend."

"Well, come and have something to eat, Si," exclaimed Ruth.

"No, I'm off again," he said. "I rode on hastily to see if all was right here, for there's a lot of suspicious folk about, and now I've got to go off, and fetch on our company."

"You'd better have something first," said Ruth.

"No, I'll fetch them on, for I expect they're well on the way. Where's Jerry?"

"Down with the bullocks," said Ruth.

"All right, I'll have a word with him as I go," said Si. "Get a good square meal ready, my lass, and I'll bring them right on. There's four of 'em to come."

"Four? Who are the four?" said Ruth.

And Patsey pricked up her ears once more.

"Wal, let me see," said Si; "there's Miss Kate, one; Mr. Wallace, two; Mr. Townsend, three."

"And who's the fourth?" said Ruth.

"Wal, hang me if I know," said Si, pondering, while Patsey's eyes looked dewy and twinkling in turn, as she listened attentively to every word. "I never thought to ask, but they said four, I know."

"Well, be quick and fetch them all," said Ruth, smiling. "Come, Patsey, we must bustle."

"Just keep close till I come back," said Si, as he was going. "Have the rifles ready, and get young Freddie inside. I shall station Jerry in the pass, and I shall be on ahead on the look-out, so there's nothing to be afraid of."

"Nothing to be afraid of, Si!" exclaimed Ruth. "Gracious, how you talk. What should there be to be afraid of?"

"Freddie said there were big bears up on the mountain," said Patsey.

"Yes, but they won't come here," said Si. "If they do, Rewth, you must give them a pill. But call up that boy."

Si started off to meet the Townsend party, blaming himself for being, as he called it, in such a scare.

"I might have known," he said, "that they couldn't get here only by one way, and I should have seen them. Here! hi! Jerry!"

"Iss, Massa Si Slocum, sah," came from a distance, and Jerry came shuffling up. "I here, sah."

"Get your big gun, Jerry, load him well, and then go and sit by the Knob Rock."

"Sit by Knob Rock wid big gun, sah?—iss, sah."

"And keep watch there. If you see danger, go back to the ranch, and stay with your missus, and help take care of her and Freddie till I come back."

"What um danger like, Massa Si Slocum, sah? I look out for um, sah, sure 'nough."

"Like rowdies and loafers—like Vasquez, who was taken in the old house in New York," said Si.

"Look out for danger like dat chap?" said Jerry.

"Look out for him; he's close by here, and vows vengeance," said Si; "but don't tell your missus till I come back."

"Phe-ew!" whistled Jerry. "Golly lor-amussy! Him here?"

"Yes, and all his set," said Si. "So now keep watch, as soon as yew've got yewer gun."

"Dat's so, sah!" exclaimed Jerry. "Golly, I wish dat card chap who put de rope round my neck come and 'tand juss afront ob de big long gun. I—oh, golly! I gib um somefin."

He trotted off towards the ranch, while Si leaped upon his mustang once more, and cantered off to meet Mr. Townsend's party, blaming himself the while for what he called his folly, as he glanced around at the impregnable nature of his little fortress.

"What had I better do?" said Si to himself.

"There's only one other way by which those rowdies could reach the ranch, and that's impassable without ropes—without they go right round by the plain, and that would take them two days. They must come my way, and I was 'bout mad to dash off as I did."

"Let's see," he mused as he rode on, "if I go on, I shall be sure to meet Mr. Foster and Miss Kate; they'll be sure to come on directly, for the men will

think I want help. Perhaps they'll bring some. I hope I shall meet them soon."

He rode steadily on, for he was quite right—Mr. Townsend's party had started directly after he had dashed off. Wallace Foster had felt that there was danger where they were, and that the sooner he joined forces with one who could and would help to protect Kate the better.

Besides which, there was a community of feeling now. It was with a strange feeling of delight that he had awakened to the fact that the much-coveted land was already in possession of Si Slocum, who, on being awakened to its value, would join heart and soul in obtaining the riches it contained, besides giving them all food and shelter upon the spot.

As to the necessary arrangements about possession, and the deeds securing to him the land, Wallace Foster knew that they would follow in due course; so he satisfied himself with taking the auctioneer's receipt for the purchase money, signing the necessary form, and then summoning Mickey, and seeing that they had ample ammunition, he left the luggage of the party in charge of the storekeeper, and they started.

CHAPTER XXIX.—PATSEY'S VISITOR.

KATE TOWNSEND was delighted to exchange the confinement of the storekeeper's hut for the freedom of the mountains, and took her place on the mule provided for her with a display of eagerness that was not unnoticed by the rough settlers who were hanging about the place, and stood staring at the beautiful girl who had so suddenly come amongst them.

Fortunately neither she nor her companions heard the remarks that were made—complimentary some of them, but many of a nature that would have made Wallace Foster turn angrily upon the speakers, had they reached his ears.

They were not long getting out and away from the place, and soon the soft, fresh mountain air was toying with the long tresses that hung about Kate's shoulders.

She was delighted with the change, and could hardly believe it true.

"It seems so strange, Wallace," she cried. "Only to think of our meeting Ruth Slocum out here, in this wild region. I shall never believe it till we get to her."

"Well, that will be in a few hours," said Wallace, though, as he spoke, an indefinable sense of dread oppressed him, and set him wondering whether his words were true.

"I am so glad," cried Kate, urging on her slow-paced mule while the others walked by her side. "But why are you so very particular about those firearms?" she added, laughing, as she saw that her father and Wallace displayed their warlike aspect rather prominently, while Mickey Doran literally bristled with offensive weapons.

"We are in a dangerous neighbourhood," said her father.

"Yes, I suppose so," exclaimed Kate, uneasily; "but, tell me—that firing this morning—did it mean anything?"

"The miners were scaring off a party of despera-

does," said Wallace, smiling; "and they drove them away."

"But what did the storekeeper mean when he offered to come with five men to see you on your way, Wallace? Is there really much danger?"

"Well, the place is not particularly safe near the gulch," said Wallace, "as is always the case in these wild regions; but every step we take will lead us more towards safety."

"But if any of these desperadoes should pursue us, Wallace," cried Kate, turning pale; "what should we do?"

"What should we do?" said Wallace, smiling as he shifted his rifle from one shoulder to the other—"ah, what should we do, Mickey?"

"Break the heads of every mother's son of them, sur," said Mickey, "or what's the use of shticks?"

"And rifles and pistols, Mickey," said Mr. Townsend, quietly.

"Sure, I forgot all about them curious kinds of irons," said Mickey. "Faith, thin, I'll shoot the lot as soon as look at them, and bate them wid the shtick asther."

Kate laughed; and no danger presenting itself, they hurried on in the direction of Slocum's ranch, Wallace relying on his knowledge of the way the mountain ran, telling himself that he could find it with ease.

Unfortunately, Wallace Foster's knowledge of the district was very limited, and before long he had led his little party far out of the direct route by which Si would make his way home to the ranch.

Certainly he would be sure to find his way sooner or later, for the mountains were such prominent landmarks that they could not be mistaken; but as these mountains were broken up into ridges and valleys, with ravines innumerable, the journey might resolve itself into one of days and days before the well-hidden home of Si Slocum was discovered.

And so it fell out that towards nightfall Wallace was obliged to own that he had lost his way, and saw no chance of finding the ranch before night came upon them, and they had to look out for a suitable place for passing the night.

"I shall not mind, Wallace," said Kate, smiling, when her betrothed seemed full of anxiety on her behalf.

"But the night air and night dews, my darling," exclaimed Mr. Townsend.

"Sure, they'll only make her purty face look the brighter in the morning," said Mickey, kicking at a heavy block of stone that lay in his path.

"Mickey," exclaimed Wallace, forgetting for a moment their trouble in the excitement of what he saw—"Mickey, do you know that this is a block of silver ore, worth at least fifty pounds?"

"Fifty pounds!" exclaimed Mickey, as all stooped to examine the block of ore. "Fifty pounds! Look at that now! Sure an' it's too big a lump to pick up, and put in one's pocket. What'll we do now?"

"Leave it," said Wallace, quietly; "there's plenty more where we are going."

"Murther!" exclaimed Mickey. "What, lave fifty pound lying about here, sur, to tempt some villin or another to stale it! Sure, sur, I wouldn't be guilty of such a mane action. Come here, darlint."

Saying this, he seized the block of ore, hoisted it upon his shoulder, and carried it to a rift in the rock, where he hid it, and then covered the spot with pieces of stone, many of which nearly approached it in value, though he was ignorant of the fact.

"There, sur," he said, climbing up a small spruce, and breaking the top, so that it hung down; "there's the mark for us to come and find it again when we want it. And now, sur, let's look out for nate and airy lodgings."

The best apartments they could find were under the spreading branches of a magnificent fir, whose boughs hung down so low that their ends brushed the ground, the whole forming no despicable tent for the occasion.

Fortunately they had a fair amount of provisions. There was a spring close at hand, and they gladly lay down to rest, after hobbling the mule, Wallace taking the first turn to keep watch.

It was a strange sensation, that of keeping guard in that grand solitude, where all was silence, and the great stars shone down with unwonted lustre. Wallace blamed himself for setting forth without a guide, and then wondered that he could have missed his way, when the wonder would have been at his finding it.

His three hours' spell of watching passed without alarm, and he gave place to Mickey, who faithfully promised to be wakeful, and to call Mr. Townsend at the end of another three hours—that would be at about four o'clock, when he was to watch till sunrise.

Mickey had hard work to keep awake, but he was successful; and at four o'clock, when he went to call Mr. Townsend, he found the old gentleman sleeping so peacefully, that, to use his own words—

"Sure, and I hadn't the heart to disturb him, poor ould soul."

So he let him sleep on till sunrise, when he called Wallace, and Mr. Townsend awoke at the same moment, when Kate was called, and, after a cool wash at the spring, they made a hearty meal, and the mule being caught, they were soon working onward in what they considered to be the right track.

Meanwhile, Si Slocum had returned to the ranch, feeling sure that Wallace Foster's party had not started.

He was uneasy, but he could do nothing, only consider his house in a state of siege; and, in readiness for any attack, he had Jerry Blackburn into the house, and they kept watch and watch till morning.

Breakfast over, he announced his intention of going in search of the party; and after once more insisting on watchfulness, and planting Jerry with his great gun at the old spot, he took the way towards the desert, feeling sure that he should there encounter either his friends or his foes.

Ruth Slocum had enough to do to keep her boy at her side, and at last, to make sure of the restless little monkey, she shut him in the inner room of the house, with the result that ten minutes after his little head was seen at the window looking watchfully out, and a few minutes later he dropped from the sill, and, his little rifle in hand, set off for the woods to shoot birds.

A little while after, Patsey was busy once more

outside the door, with her little stove burning beside the table placed under the tree which shaded the house, and finishing up the ironing left undone on the previous day, while Ruth went on with sundry arrangements for the comfort of the coming visitors.

Patsey was singing away over her work, while Jerry Blackburn, who had given his long gun a second dose of powder, sat perched in a niche of rock overlooking the narrow path, by which there was a faint possibility that any one might come from the north, though the way was so rugged that the advent of a visitor, friendly or inimical, seemed quite out of the question.

The sun was getting higher every moment, and though Jerry was on a perch where fifty people might go by and not see him, the sun was so inquisitive that it found him out, and the hot rays poured down upon him in all directions, even as they were reflected from the rock.

"Now, lookye hyar," exclaimed Jerry, who had kept shifting about uncomfortably for some time past, "don't you go finking I goin' stand any your nonsense, cos I go bash your head 'gainst de lock of de gun, for you know whar you am."

The object Jerry addressed was a great fly, which kept hovering and buzzing about his ears, and making little dashes at his nose and eyes, with the evident intention of settling as soon as it could get a chance.

"You'd better go yourself off, sah," exclaimed Jerry, as the fly grew more obnoxious: "dah, take dat!"

Buzz went the fly, and it soared on a couple of yards; for though Jerry had hit at it savagely, his hand did not go within reach of the tiresome insect. But he was freed from it for the minute; so, resting his gun up against the rock, Jerry settled himself comfortably in his niche, and began to stare straight before him.

It was very hot, and as he stared Jerry's eyes began slowly to close, his mouth opened, and then he gave a slight nod, then a sharper one, which awoke him, his eyes opened, his mouth closed, and he sat bolt upright once more.

"Guess I near went 'sleep," he said, drowsily. "Dah's dat fly 'gain."

But the fly did not come near him this time, and once more Jerry's eyes closed, his mouth opened cavernously, and he kept on emitting a dull, roaring sound at regular intervals; for the heat had been sufficient to make Jerry lazy, and he was fast asleep. .

So it was that, while Patsey was busy singing away, she popped down her iron with a bang, for it seemed to her that she heard a distant "Halloo!"

"There it is again!" cried Patsey. "Hi, missus, here's some one coming."

Ruth ran out, and they stood with flushed faces and beating hearts, listening, when the shout came again, "Halloo!" echoing in the rocky pass, and evidently the man who uttered it was close at hand.

"Shall we answer?" said Patsey.

"No, no, it may be enemies," cried Ruth. "Look." She pointed excitedly to a couple of figures coming

round the bend, and caught Patsey's arm previous to hurrying her into the house.

"Why, it's—it's—oh, my!" cried Patsey.

And throwing herself on the ground, she covered her face with her hands, and began to laugh hysterically.

"Get up, you foolish girl," exclaimed Ruth; "what is the matter? Can you see who it is? Look, one of them is waving his hat. Yes, Patsey, yew're right, it's Mr. Wallace Foster."

She waved her handkerchief to him as she spoke, and, rifle in hand, Wallace hurried along the rocky path, closely followed by Mickey Doran; while Patsey leaped up, and looking wonderfully demure, went on ironing.

"Why, Mr. Foster," at last cried Ruth, catching the young man's extended hand, "I am glad to see you. Grown so handsome, too, and brown. How are you, Mickey?"

"Perty well, thank you kindly, ma'am," said Mickey, who was staring with all his might at Patsey, who, with a flaming red face, kept banging down her iron.

"I should have been here before with our little party," said Wallace, heartily returning her greetings, "but we lost our way. I've left Mr. Townsend and Miss Kate about a mile back in the mountains; they're tired out, while I came on to explore."

"You've found the right place," said Ruth; "so hurry back. There, I'll come with you and show you. But didn't you see Si—he's on the look-out for you?"

"No," was the reply.

"Nor Jerry?"

"No, neither of them," said Wallace. "I don't suppose I came by the regular track, though. Come along, Mickey."

As he spoke Ruth caught up her straw hat, and led him towards the track by which he had just descended to the ranch; while Mickey, who seemed turned to stone, stood, heedless of his companion's words, staring at Patsey, who for her part made believe not to see him.

"Ah, what you're there, are you?" she said at last, as she turned to change her iron. "Why don't you go?"

"Sure, and is that the way ye spake to a boy as is drhaming of yer bright eyes night and day, ever since he clapped his own upon them that day in New York?"

"Stuff and nonsense," said Patsey, making believe to burn him with the iron. "Guess it's all rubish."

"Me darlin', I'm burnin' up intirely for ye," said Mickey. "And haven't I crossed the great plains o' purpose to find ye, and ask ye to be Mistress Doran?"

"Don't believe you," said Patsey, flourishing the iron. "It's all stuff."

"And she don't look cruel nayther," said Mickey, apostrophising the tree. "What a beautiful little jewel it is. Knock me down wid the bit of an iron, darlin', and I'll be happy iver after."

"Mickey!" came from out of the rocky gap.

"Sure, I'm comin', sur," roared Mickey; "but it's the loadstone is howlding me so as I can't move

hand or fut." He added in a lower tone of voice, "Och, dairint, give me one kind look of yer bright eye avore I go, and make me a happy man."

"If you don't run off directly, I'll never look on you again, I guess," said Patsey, giving him one roguish glance, which made him try to catch her in his arms.

"Stand off," cried Patsey, and she held the hot iron in his face, making him start back; but he caught her wrist, gave the back of her hand a kiss, snatched up his rifle, and ran off.

"Guess he's nice, after all," said Patsey, looking after Mickey till he disappeared, and then giving a glance round before kissing the place where Mickey's lips had rested. "Oh, I say, aint I stupid?" she continued to herself, setting down her iron, and looking straight before her. "Wonder whether he has thought about me since we came away? I shouldn't mind being married. Guess its kinder solitary out here, with no one but Si Slocum to see from year's end to year's end. Wonder whether he'll ask me to marry him when he comes back? My! how red it makes my cheeks thinking of such stuff. But he is nicer than Mr. Wallace ever so much, that he is, and he's got such a way with him. There, if he aint coming back on tiptoe to kiss me. My, what impudence. I'll pretend not to see him."

It was not Mickey, though, but a great brown bear—a monstrous fellow, with little, red-fire-like eyes, and a mouth full of glistening white teeth, about which played his red tongue.

The bear came softly shambling along, looking here and there, and made its way right down to the front of the cottage, where, rearing up on its hind legs, it stopped close to Patsey, and clasped her round the waist.

"What a shame!" said Patsey aloud, without turning her head. "How dare you be so rude! There, if you hug me so tight I'll scream. Guess you needn't wear such gloves as— Help, help, help!"

Poor Patsey, her ignorance did not last many moments before she found out who was her visitor, when shrieking with all her might, she seized the paws that encircled her waist, and tried to set herself at liberty.

A Dish of Tea.

BY A TASTER.

HOW times are altered since in the days of Charles II. people paid sixty shillings per pound for the new and curious vegetable that our merchants had brought us from China. This vegetable came in the form of crisp, dried, and rolled-up leaves, which were carefully boiled and eaten, the liquor in which they had been cooked being thrown away.

I hope they enjoyed the mess. But that was in days when tea-leaves were not saved by maid Mary to use when sweeping the carpet.

The proper way to make tea, according to the cynical friend in Mr. Saville Rowe's charming little version of Octave Feuillet, now being played at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, is to place so many spoon-

fuls in a warm teapot, to pour upon them a sufficiency of boiling water, and the moment the marriage between the tea and the water has taken place to drink the product. No standing to draw, no coaxing with cosies or placing upon the hob, but to drink the tea instanter and with a slice of lemon floating in the amber liquid, which should be unstained by milk or cream, unsweetened with sugar.

This may be the Russian fashion, but it is not mine; and, as one who is an old woman over a cup of tea, give me the certain amount of standing to draw, and the adjuncts of milk and sugar.

Why not? The tea alone is a delicious sedative and refresher, but with the sugar and milk it is made highly nutritive as well.

I stickle, though, for good tea; and have heard with envy of the delicious parcels that are so carefully packed and camel-borne from China through the wild north to Russia. With similar envy have I read the accounts of the choice pickings of the first crop leaves that are cannily reserved for the home use of the gentry of the childlike and bland smile, while for our especial benefit is reserved the exhausted leaf, which is dried, doctored, coloured, and then packed in lead, ready for export, and known now to us as "Maloo mixture."

As an old tea-drinker, my experience has been very varied.

I have bought here and I have bought there. I have purchased tea that is cheap and tea that is dear, by which I mean tea that has been cheap at seven shillings per pound, and other that has been extremely dear at two-and-ninelpence. I have joined with friends in small chests, and I have regretted the union; and one way and another, after trying teas of all names, whether from China or Assam, have at last anchored my faith on one particular class, for it is the best I have ever had, while it possesses the great advantage that it never varies, but—speaking after years of experience—can always be obtained of the same strength, flavour, and quality.

As a kind of tea butterfly, I have rested on Assam leaves; but good as the tea from these Indian plantations is, it possesses a peculiar flavour that requires an education to understand it, and even when understood it does not touch my palate in a friendly spirit, and for years past it has been by me cast aside. If my memory serves me rightly, it was in 1850 that I first tasted Assam tea, and thought it peculiar. Twenty years later the same peculiarity clung to it, and I set it aside once more.

It was quite by chance that some eight years ago I bought a small parcel of tea for taking down into the country, and the place of purchase was Messrs. Cooper, Cooper, and Co's., in King William-street, London Bridge. I trusted to the shopman, and he recommended me to try No. 3 and No. 9. This I did in the proportion of three to one, and the mixture that resulted took such a hold that to this day it is continued.

No. 3 was a new tea to me—Kyshow; No. 9 was every one's old green friend, Hyson—Moyune Hyson; and, honestly, these are the perfection of teas, such as would satisfy the most fastidious palate. In fact, these teas at three and four shillings per

pound are superior to much for which double the price is often paid.

These merchants seem to have started with the fixed idea of giving the best attainable tea at a fixed price, and public confidence has followed their very straightforward dealing.

Messrs. Cooper give ample instructions how to make tea, and pin their faith to earthenware teapots, even as do the Chinese, who should know best what is suited for the purpose. The water must be boiling—not boiling according to a servant's notion of boiling water, which generally means many degrees below boiling point; it must be poured all on at once, and after ten minutes' waiting the tea—their tea—is an infusion fit for a prince.

The Eggist's Note-book.

THE following appears in a weekly periodical. No doubt the promoters mean well, but are they not beginning at the wrong end? How about what they are licensed to sell?—"At the Licensed Victuallers' 'prayer meeting,' held recently at 'My House,' Crooked-lane, City, the publicans presented their missionary, Mr. Jas. C. Parker, with a beautiful edition, in 12 vols., of the writings of Thomas Goodwin, D.D. The landlord, Mr. Newman, made a few remarks, and referred to the labours of their missionary in the 'City taverns,' to promote the religious, moral, and domestic welfare of the publicans, their assistants, and customers. Five members of 'the trade' then engaged in prayer, and asked God's blessing on the proclamation of the Gospel under circumstances of difficulty. All persons connected with taverns are at liberty to attend the meetings, which are held on the first Monday in every month at eight p.m."

Mr. Cosgrave, the irate suitor who revenged himself for defeat by throwing an egg at Vice-Chancellor Malins, and who at the same time had a pistol suspiciously secreted about his person, was sent to Holloway Gaol. Some two hundred years ago, a man, for assaulting a witness in Court, was condemned to imprisonment for life, forfeiture of his goods, and to have his right hand cut off at the "Standard in Cheape." And this, be it remembered, was for assaulting a witness merely—not the more awful offence of throwing an egg at the sacred person of a Vice-Chancellor. In 1631, again, a prisoner who had just been condemned for felony unwisely showed his want of appreciation of the justice done him by throwing a brickbat at the judge. It did not hit the mark, but the unwaried prisoner had his right hand amputated on the spot, and nailed to the gibbet on which, in a few minutes afterwards, he himself was hanged. It was all done in presence of the Court. A little judicious restraint in gaol is preferable to that, as even Mr. Cosgrave must admit.

A few days since, a gentleman at Eastbourne was presented by his wife with twins, who, with the mother, are doing well. They have one other child living. The lady was born without arms, and was married about two and a half years ago. She wears

her wedding ring on her toe, and does all the house-work with her feet, with a dexterity that is surprising. How she will manage to nurse her twin babies is a problem yet to be solved.

A company of French soldiers were scaling a fort. On reaching the crest of the parapet they were received with a terrible fusillade, which for the moment drove them back. The drummer rushed behind a heap of stones to conceal himself.

"Why do you run away?" shouted the captain.

"I'm not running away, captain; but I don't want those ruffians to break my drum."

"Don't put your heads on the couches, gentlemen. They are not covered, and the colours are very delicate."

"You need not be afraid, madam," exclaimed one of the gentlemen, "I don't use pomade."

"Nor I," said the other, whose head was as smooth as a billiard ball.

A clever but self-willed *chef* recently quitted a nobleman's service, and established himself in a small but elegant restaurant in the suburbs of Paris. His dinners were splendid, but he made it a rule not to serve again any customer who left anything on his plate.

A party of gentlemen, in order to get over this difficulty, took with them a couple of favourite dogs. Mirabolant, however, perceived the trick, and immediately posted up the following notice in the room:— "Dogs not admitted here, nor their masters again."

The other night a well-known dramatic author dropped in at one of the theatres.

"Put me in a good place," said he to the female attendant.

"Ah, yes, sir, I will, as it's you. You shall have No. 71, beside my mother."

Mrs. M——, the wife of a retired Whitechapel butcher, sent her daughter to a fashionable boarding school. Calling to see her the other day, she was astonished to learn that the girl made very little progress.

"Yes, yes," said she, "I see how it is. She's always at the bottom of the class. If you were to put her at the top, now, it would give the girl a little more spirit."

THE morality of the business world may be considered at a very low ebb, when almost directly a new article has been introduced, and is by universal consent considered a success, worthless imitations of it appear. These imitators trade upon the reputation gained by the original invention, and if not narrowly watched bring it into bad repute. Imitations are in existence of the "New Patent Stocking Suspender," the only safeguard being the name of Almond stamped on every clasp and on the band. Every lady desiring health and comfort should provide herself with a pair of these useful articles, which may be obtained of Mr. H. J. Almond, 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, E.C. Ladies' size, post free, 3s. 2d. per pair. Size of waist required.

A Leaf of Gold.**CHAPTER III.**

I WILL sit in the chancel, where the purple window throws its light on mother's grave ; and the music, blest with tender memories, may perhaps find a way to melt the pain in my heart and make me weep. A real good cry would do me a world of good.

The sun is sinking in unimaginable glories behind the blue, distant hills as I turn into the garden after my decision. The sultry air is heavy with odours from the full-blossomed lilac trees.

The lilacs are very late this year, but they are fuller and richer than usual.

I pull down some beautiful clusters, and gather a few white lilies and roses and some cool green leaves, and then thread my way silently among the quiet graves to the little church beyond.

The schoolmaster is giving instruction to the man who accompanies him.

He does not notice me, as I steal softly down the aisle, and take my place at the foot of the communion rail.

The gold and purple of the last rays of sunlight mingle in chequered bars on the black and white squares of the marble floor.

Some portion of the deep red light from the rose window falls over me, and I love to sit in this ruby warmth, and imagine how I look with an aureole round my head.

The organist is long in starting to-night, but I must be patient. That is Grace's seat by the pillar, next to the old monument of Rupert de Hilse. I think she will be rather sorry to give it up for one in the pew near Arthur, where I sit at present in solitary grandeur.

Just opposite to me, Bruce sits when he comes to church, which is not often. I have several times found him, after the service, smoking in the little hollow where the wood dips into the fields. Once I quarrelled with him about it, and he came quite regularly for some weeks ; but that was a long time ago. Then my thoughts wander, or rather return, to my mother's grave, and to herself. I lay the lilies and blossoms she loved so well upon the marble stone at my feet, and think how some day I shall see that loved face again, with all the pain traces and lines swept away for ever, and the bloom of an everlasting beauty irradiating those refined, gentle features. Then shall I not cling to her, and hide my face in her bosom, and tell her how I longed for her when my heart was troubled, and how the constant thought of her at such times alone strengthened and upheld me.

On my right hand is another inscription, upon a white marble stone that seems part of the flooring of the chancel :

"In loving remembrance of Estelle Cecile Damer, who passed away to an immortal life in her twenty-second year."

This Estelle Cecile Damer is Bruce's young mother, whom he worships almost as a patron saint. She died two days after Bruce was born. The sudden news of the death of her husband killed her. He was an English officer, who fell at the taking of Lucknow.

*Mr. Rutherford brought Bruce up, and Maud—
Hark, there is the organ ! The grand anthem
from Mozart's Twelfth Mass sounds through the
church. I hardly know how it affects me. I drop
the rest of my flowers on Estelle's name, and am
thrilled and chilled by the ascending paean, as though
I were under the influence of a galvanic battery. I
lift up my face and close my eyes, and, with hands
clasped over my knees, drink in the inspired strains
with ecstasy. My head grows dizzy and confused ; the
music sounds louder and grander every moment.*

*My soul appears lifted out of my body, and I seem
to rise and float on the wings of the majestic melody.
Suddenly there is a great silence, and then a voice,
clear, distinct as a clarion, breaks my dream, or spell,
or madness, or whatever you like to call my mood.
I cannot hear what the voice says ; my brain does
not retain it during the moment that elapses before
I awake to full consciousness.*

*At first I cannot remember where I am, until my
hand, groping feebly among the flowers, is caught
by another larger, firmer palm.*

*I open my eyes, and collect my scattered senses
by an effort of will.*

*The music is slowly dying away ; the sombre
shadows of evening have succeeded the golden rays
of light, the air is redolent with the breath of flowers,
and the hand that clasps mine is no myth or ima-
gined phantom of an over-excited brain ; for Bruce
Damer is kneeling by his mother's grave.*

*Oh, Bruce, my darling, my love, my own for ever !
I never knew until this moment how much I loved
you, how thoroughly my fate is bound up in yours,
how impossible life would be to me without your
love !*

*When I found myself in the lane, your arm sup-
porting me, and your voice dropped to its old tender
tone, I could not help shutting my eyes, and think-
ing it was still a part of my dream ; and sitting now
in my own bed-room, watching the still fair fields
you have just crossed in the light of the moon, it
all comes back to me so fresh, so beautiful, so true.
Bruce loves me ; he has told me so, and I shall marry
him. How my cheeks burn at thinking such words !
I hope it is not wrong to dream of the joy in store
for me as his wife. Oh, Bruce, my darling, my dar-
ling, how happy you have made me !*

*I have been trying to remember everything he
said as we stood together beneath the old elm by the
garden wall, but I cannot. I know he took my face
between his hands as in the days gone by.*

*The diamond on his finger shone like a setting star,
and he looked down into my eyes and read my soul,
read its longing and its love ; and then because he
could not bear to read its sorrow, he put my face on
his breast, and kissed me, long without a word. What
strange love language he used, too, the little I can
remember, and how sorrowful and broken his voice
was ! Does great happiness make any one so sad ?
And now that I recall his face, it looked pale and hag-
gard, as though he had passed some sleepless nights.
Perhaps he has been suffering also in imagining I did
not love him. Bruce is very proud, but he will tell
me all to-morrow. He loves me, and that is all I
desire to know now—loves me desperately, he says
wickedly ; but that cannot be, for he has all my love,*

and we are both free; but I am too tired to write more now. To-morrow, Bruce says, I shall know everything.

CHAPTER IV.

BELLE, come into my study when you have finished with those flowers. I want to talk to you a little."

"Surely, you have not lost anything," I answer, gaily. "I was very careful to remove all your papers myself this morning before Susan dusted, and I thought I carried them all back."

"So you did, and sorted them beautifully; but it is upon quite another subject I want to talk to you now."

"All right, dear, I am ready; see, are not these roses lovely? I fancy I have a knack of arranging flowers, as Grace has of growing them."

"They are very, very sweet. I wish your cheeks had a little of their bloom. Isabel, by the bye, you have been stronger lately, have you not?"

"Oh, yes, dear, much stronger—living in the open air is good for me; for really, since Grace returned from France, that is what my constant running backwards and forwards to the cottage has amounted to. But why go to your study, when the morning is so delicious, and we can have all the garden to ourselves? Dear old boy, how serious you look! You are not going to scold me much, eh?"

I tie my broad straw hat on my head, and empty the skirts of my dress of the petals, and leaves, and litter of fallen flowers; for I brought in all the flowers from the garden this morning in the folds of my dress.

I smooth out with my fingers my pretty crumpled muslin apron, give a few finishing touches to my decorations, and, with a last sidelong glance at the effect of my handiwork in the *tout ensemble* of the apartment, I follow Arthur into the garden.

The morning is so sunny and warm, and I am so happy, I hardly know how to contain my joy.

Were Arthur not present, with a certain sadness in the look of his eyes, I think I should sing aloud, or chase the golden butterflies that flit like winged stars among the lilies and roses.

But as it is, I walk demurely by his side, squeezing his arm affectionately from time to time, as he leads me slowly along the stately high-boxed walks.

At last I can wait no longer; and I question him eagerly on what he has to tell me.

"You are not serious enough, Belle; and therefore we will defer our conversation to another time."

I am serious to gravity in a moment.

"I did not know it was anything serious, dear; but now I am quite ready to listen to all you have to say to me."

My cheeks are flushing redly, and I dare not lift my eyes, lest Arthur should see their gay and dancing light. I feel instinctively that it is about Bruce, Arthur wishes to speak; and the very thought that my secret is no longer mine sends a tingling flame even to my finger-ends. I stoop down by the high wall of box, to hide my confusion, and narrowly hunt for a bird's nest that should be in the vicinity.

"What I have to say to you, Isabel, is not of much importance, but it is as well you should know;

so that you may not suffer yourself to be guilty of any indiscretion that would make the people talk of you. Bruce Damer is not a man I would like to see meeting my sister as a lover at any time; but under the circumstances, it is simply disgraceful of him to attempt it."

I feel myself turning to ice while Arthur speaks. I rise slowly, and stand waiting for him to proceed.

"My little sister," he says, with a great love and pity in his voice, "I did not mean to frighten you; but Bruce Damer is to be married next week, and it is not seemly that you should meet him alone at dusk, although you may be innocent of any intention to do harm."

"But I love him," I cry, the confession breaking from my lips before I have time to think, "and he loves me; and what you say is not true."

"Isabel, tell me: has this man, who has been engaged for years to the woman he is about to marry for mercenary motives, dared to win your love as a free man? Speak, my darling: has Bruce Damer been guilty of so base a thing?"

I have never seen Arthur so severe, so earnest as he is now—his hands tremble with emotion as he holds mine in an iron grip. None the less I do not believe him, when I look around at the sky, and the flowers, and warm, dazzling sunshine; there is some mistake, I know; but Bruce will explain everything, as he promised.

"Bruce never tried to win my love," I say at last, because Arthur is holding me so tight, and expecting me to say something. "I do not know that he has ever said one word of love to me till we met by accident last night, and I do not quite recollect all we said then; but whatever happens, Bruce is not to blame. I told him I loved him, or he guessed so. I have loved him all my life."

"My poor Isabel!"

"Do not pity me, dear; and please let my hands go. If Bruce loves another woman, I can be happy in knowing of his happiness; and if not, then no harm is done, because I may go on loving him all my life."

"My darling Isabel!"

"But remember, if Bruce loves me—"

"Well, dear?"

I pass my hands over my forehead; a mist is gathering before my eyes.

"Who is the lady whom it is said Bruce will marry?"

"Maud Rutherford."

A vision of Maud in her silks and jewels flashes before my mind's eye. I see her quite distinctly—the graceful figure, the pale, passionless face, and large dark eyes. Now, as I shudder in the June sunlight, I know why I have always hated Maud Rutherford.

"And why was this kept from me?" I ask, dreamily. "Why did not Grace, or Maud, or you, tell me of this engagement?"

"It was not known until a few days ago, when Bruce consented that it should be made public, preparatory to the wedding. But you do not greatly care for him, Isabel. If you have never met him before last night, and have had no love scenes with

him, you will soon forget this girlish fancy, will you not?"

"Perhaps so," I reply, sadly, plucking a flower to pieces without knowing what I am doing; "it is easy for some people to forget."

"I shall never cease to blame myself, if you are unhappy," the dear fellow says, and his eyes look wonderfully soft and shining. "I ought to have looked after you better, and have thought of this beforehand."

"Don't make me cry," I say, laughing forcedly, "or I shall not know when to stop; and cry I must if you speak in that way of your love and kindness to me. It is I who am ungrateful, to ever have let one thought of love wander from you."

Then, not being able longer to suppress my tears, I break away from Arthur, and fly as one pursued through the garden and rickyard, past the orchard and granaries, to a favourite old barn, smelling of the sweet hay with which it is filled; and there, beneath a pile of trusses, with all my chickens round me, and the sweet noises of the rickyard filling in the pauses of my grief, I weep and weep as though my love and life would both be dissolved with my tears.

After all, it does not surprise me very much, and Maud is far more fitted to be Bruce's wife than I am; and the sureness that even if he marry her he will not love her, is balm to my aching heart. Strangely enough, as I rock myself to and fro, the melody of Bruce's song, and the touchingly sad words, seem ringing still in my ears.

My summer is over, even as Margarita's. My hope and delight have also passed from life away, and the leaf of gold remaining to me is the knowledge of Bruce's love—his dear, dear love—although I may never see his face again.

One thing I do not doubt—his love for me.

I do not think angrily of Bruce, never for one single moment. True love is always to be trusted in its intuitions; and I know Bruce has not willingly deceived either himself or me. He is an orphan, and poor, brought up by his uncle with extravagant habits and expensive tastes; and expected, as a matter of course, to fall in love with his rich cousin, and marry her.

And Maud, I doubt not, loves him.

He is so handsome, so clever, and so much liked by all who know him; and Maud is cold and proud, and hates the country; and yet she may not leave her uncle until she marries—and there is no one to marry her here but Bruce. And so it comes to pass that they marry each other, and pass away from Weldon, and I am alone for ever.

Gradually my weeping ceases, and I grow calm.

The sunshine pours through a great chink in the large black door, and lies in one long golden beam upon the fragrant, hay-carpeted floor. My chickens have found out by this that I am provided with no means for appeasing their appetites, and they have left me to continue their endless clucking and scratching, evidently determined to make up for lost time.

I sit absently watching them, with my face resting on my hands, and Gounod's song echoing dully in my brain. I can hear the cows lowing in the mea-

dow, on to which the trap window of the barn opens.

I listen mechanically to Bill, the stable boy, who is singing, after a rough fashion of his own, as he helps the dairymaid scour her pails. The song in my head, with its passionate, despairing cry after a lost youth, and hope, and love, makes this other senseless melody almost unendurable. Now and then a peal of laughter comes over the meadow, to strike upon my ears with a hideous sense of the incongruity of things.

"But why," I suddenly ask myself, "should all the world be unhappy because I am deceived and desolate?"

Still, it is with a sense of infinite relief that, clambering on the hay, I open the square of wood that forms the window, and see that Bill and Nancy, having finished their work, are disappearing in the direction of the house.

Again silence reigns, and the silence is worse than the mirth and laughter. I forget to descend from the height I have climbed, the trap window has closed itself, and I sit stupidly on the topmost beam of the old-fashioned roof, as though the world and I had parted for ever.

"Isabel, my darling, where are you? Oh, Isabel, do not hide from me. For pity's sake, my love, come to me, Isabel!"

It is with a sudden thrill of genuine pleasure that I recognize the voice as Bruce's voice, the hurried step as Bruce's step, the face and form that peer into the fragrant dusk as belonging to Bruce, of all people in the world.

It seems so natural we should be playing hide and seek once more, as we have so often done before. I draw my dress closely round me, and shrink as far from sight as possible, hoping he will not see me.

But his eyes are too eager, and he knows my haunts too well. In another instant he has discovered my whereabouts, and has swung himself on to the same beam, close by my side.

We shake hands, he holds my fingers for a moment in his; he takes off his straw hat, and fans himself vehemently. The chickens, who have fled in terror at his impetuous rush across the golden light in which they were basking, have returned with ruffled feathers and disturbed minds to their former pasture; and only a low, occasional, indignant cluck betrays their presence.

"Who told you I was here?" I say at last, forgetting for the moment how little right he has to be sitting so familiarly beside me.

"I saw you run through the orchard half an hour ago, and I have been waiting at the croft gate ever since, thinking you would return that way; and then I concluded you had seen me, and wished to avoid me, and so would not return."

"I did not see you."

"Then you did not wish to avoid me?"

"No, indeed; why should I?"

"You have not heard anything?"

"Oh, yes, I have heard a great deal more than I wanted to know; but what does it signify? I have been sitting here so long, and have thought of so many things, that I feel as if nothing could surprise or pain me any more. I suppose I feel much as

dead people do, but without the perfect rest that waits on them."

"Do you hate me, Isabel?"

"No, indeed I do not."

"You know all, and love me in spite of it?"

"I am only a girl," I answer, shyly; "and therefore do not know how a man looks upon a great sorrow that falls upon him unexpectedly. As a girl, I take it with what meekness and faith I am capable of, and in saying good-bye to you for ever my heart is only full of love—so full, that the only danger one has to fear is that it may break before its time."

"Isabel, you humble me to the dust. I am not worthy of your love. I was never worthy of it. Forgive me, if you can, but do not think I am deserving of your—"

He breaks down utterly, and great tears fall upon my two hot hands, that he had seized and kept while speaking to me.

We are both silent long enough. Then Bruce asks me about Arthur, and tells me the story of his own engagement to Maud. My own thoughts were right; but I do not shrink from what he tells me, that Maud loves him, as I had imagined she did.

We are silent again. What can we say?

"I wonder you care to sit in this dull place," I remark, carelessly, after a while. "The world is so fair outside, and this barn—"

"Is the dearest place in all my past recollections, Isabel. Did not you and I rake this hay together when it was still green and fresh? Did we not get lectured for our rompish propensities when we chased each other down into the lane, with our arms full of this dusty, crumpled, dead grass?—and all the flowers in it know my love for you, Isabel. I learned it in their presence, and whispered to them in the evenings, when I walked home by the little footpath near the brook. Oh, do not say I must not speak! Isabel, pity me, for I am very wretched."

"Why do you marry Maud at all?" I ask, through my tears. "And if you must marry her, why do you speak of your love for me? I am so insignificant, it will be easy to forget me."

In reply, he turns and clasps me in his arms.

"If you do that again," I say, "we shall both fall to the ground, and be truer objects of pity to the outside world than we are now."

"I can never forgive myself for my weakness," he answers, taking no notice of my words in his self-recriminations. "I would have killed myself sooner than have occasioned you this misery."

I feel all the strength slipping out of my body as I listen to him. I clasp the cross-beams with both arms, to keep myself from falling.

"Do you not love me, Bruce?"

"As my life, Isabel. God forgive me!"

"And yet you will marry Maud?"

"I am bound by every consideration to do so."

"You were forced into your engagement years ago, and have regretted it ever since?"

"My darling, let us not talk of that now! It was none the less binding on that account."

"You do not love her, and your promise is not binding at all."

"My word was pledged to Maud before I knew you, Isabel; that is, before I knew you in these

later years. A man's word cannot be withdrawn at pleasure."

"But she does not love you," I say, desperately. "She will release you. Oh, Bruce, will you not tell her the truth? She will be too proud to marry a man who does not love her."

Bruce covers his face with his hands, and groans aloud.

"I have told her, Isabel, and she will not release me."

"Have you told her you love me?"

"No."

"Then why not do so? Maud is very generous. She may wish to marry you from many motives connected with family matters, and she has gathered all her ideas of married life from France, and perhaps does not think love is as necessary to married happiness as we believe it to be; but were you to tell her the whole truth—"

"And be refused again? Oh, I could not do it!"

It seems such a straightforward course to me, that I cannot understand Bruce's sensitiveness. Can it be that he only wants my forgiveness for a mad hour of forgetfulness, and does not wish to make an effort, and so gain my love?

I watch him for a few moments silently; then my head grows dizzy, I slip from the beam on to the hay, and cover my face with my hands.

He is still so silent, that at last I am compelled to rouse him. I touch him gently on the arm.

He starts, as from a dream, and springs to my side.

"My darling, I was thinking so deeply, I had forgotten you."

"Yes."

"I was wondering how long it would take a very earnest fellow to earn a name and fame in the great city."

"Yes."

"You know that I have not a penny in the world, Isabel?"

"No."

"And have plenty of debts—not large ones, but more than it is pleasant to think about. I wonder, now, what practical poverty is like?"

"It is dreadful, Bruce. I see enough of it in Weldon every day of my life."

"But if I let you go now, even for a short time, I shall have lost you for ever."

"Then do not let me go. Be true to Maud, to yourself, to me. Tell her that not only do you not love her, but that you love me; and she will release you, and all will be well."

"But I am so poor, Isabel, and so unworthy of any woman's love. Forget me, as I deserve; and do not let my name ever remind you of my love and misery. Good-bye, and God bless you."

"But you will not go, you will not leave me? Bruce, listen to me: come back to me, I love you."

I step back into the shadow of the beam, and cover my face with my hands.

In another moment Bruce has climbed back, and clasped me in his arms. I push him gently but firmly from me.

"You must not kiss me so, nor say such words to

me, because you are still Maud's lover, and she trusts and honours you."

"But you will meet me again, Isabel, after I have seen Maud? I could not leave Weldon without a last word from you."

"Leave Weldon! Why must you do that?"

"To earn my living, to work hard for a home for you."

"But your uncle—"

"Will leave me to my own devices; indeed, that is all I can expect from him."

"What will you do, Bruce?" I ask, after a pause, in which I conquer an almost irresistible impulse to break out into a flood of tears.

"Many things are running through my mind, but I must have time to think and decide; but never fear, my darling, I will be worthy of your love—in-deed, indeed I will."

"And Maud?"

"Oh, do not speak of her now; let us forget her existence."

"Shall you see her to-day?"

"As soon as I leave you, dear Isabel; do not trouble, she will be quite willing to let me go. When I entered here to seek you, I was so full of misery and fear that I dared not hope at all. Now, my darling, your love has given me all the courage I lacked. At all risks I will not marry Maud, and at all risks I will love you, and keep you to the end of my life."

"It will be very hard to earn enough money to keep a wife—you, who have never done anything but amuse yourself so long; and Mr. Rutherford will be very unjust to you if he does not start you fair, with both money and opportunity for such a laudable endeavour."

"No fear, Isabel; he has set his heart upon my marrying Maud, and I believe has purposely made me dependent upon him to ensure my obedience. We do not think about such things when we have been accustomed to have all our wants supplied freely; and rightfully, I am his heir, you know."

"And yet you will mortally offend him for me?"

"I would do anything for you, Isabel, to see you smile, and hear you say again—'I love you.'"

"But are you sure you will never regret your decision, when trials and difficulties crowd around you?"

"Never—more than you shall ever regret calling me back to you, and giving me the life and hope of a man. Why, Isabel, I am growing so happy, as I realize your love, that I can hardly recognize myself."

We both laugh a little; and all my fears and terrors fly to the winds as I listen to Bruce's earnest, manly words.

Verily, a great love can change a man, can lift and elevate him on to another and higher plane of thought and action; and that in a very little time, as we reckon time by hours and days.

I have never heard such resolute words from him as I hear now; have never seen before so determined a look upon his fair, handsome face.

He tells me of his wish to become an artist or an author; of his friend, Leon Fairfax, who has a great opinion of his (Bruce's) ability as a painter, and

who has often urged him to pursue art as a profession.

He is full of hope and energy as he talks, and gradually I cease to fear the battle of life will be too strong for him. He does not speak to me of that better and nobler nature, that always disdained the forced and unnatural life that has been thrust upon him from his early youth; he does not tell me how much courage he has to spurn it from him, and live out nobly and freely to the world; but I read it all in his voice, his eyes, his earnest and tender words of love. Once, nay, twice, I turn my face from him to hide my tears.

For my sake he is giving up every comfort, every enjoyment that his life has been accustomed to; and giving them up willingly and gladly, to work for me, that he may win me as his wife in the years to come.

And I am powerless to help him in the great struggle for existence. I can do nothing but wait patiently, and love and comfort him all I may until the goal is reached. Through all the long, struggling years, I can only give him kindly words, and a few tears and kisses to help him on his way.

We do not part to meet again later. There is a train to London at four p.m., and Bruce is to leave by that express, having seen Maud directly after lunch. And this is to be our final interview for the present. For Maud's sake, and for our own, and to prevent a great deal of unnecessary scandal, we decide to keep our engagement a secret for the present. At the end of three months, Bruce is to return to me, laden with money and success.

Such is our pleasant dream, while the time slips by unheedingly. We have so much to say and to explain, and in our dusky solitude we are safe from all interruptions.

Very soon we forget everything but our own exceeding happiness.

All future troubles, and fears, and lonelinesses become merged in the golden light of the present.

Suddenly the noon-bell startles us with the warning that we must part, and all my strength fails me at the thought of saying a long, and perhaps a last, good-bye.

"You will write to me, Bruce, every week, and oftener—oh, much oftener—will you not?"

"I thought, dear, we had decided that Arthur should not be taken into our confidence until I had earned a better title to his respect. You could not receive letters unknown to him."

"No, of course not," I reply, sadly. "But what does it matter? We can trust each other, can we not?"

For answer, he takes me in his arms, and kisses me long and passionately.

"Do not fear, little one; the fight will be a very happy one, with you as my reward. In three months I shall return to you a successful man."

"But, my darling, every one has to fail a great many times before he is successful, especially in art or literature, and it may be so with you also; but promise me you will not stay away one day longer. I could not live without I had your promise to look forward to, with perfect faith that you would keep it."

"Then I will promise you, Isabel, to return to

you in three months' time, successful or otherwise, and take you away for ever."

And so we linger, and talk, and comfort each other on the heights of fragrant hay. I ask him to leave me here when he goes away; for I want to recall his every word, and look, and tone, and to fix them in my heart and memory for ever.

And so the last words are spoken, and the last kisses kissed, and Bruce forces himself to smile and look gay. I slip out of his arms, and hold him back as he attempts to leap to the ground.

"Isabel, let me go while I have strength."

"Where will you go?"

"To London or Paris."

"Then God bless you, Bruce."

"And you, too. Farewell, my Isabel."

He breaks away from me, and springs to the ground, throws open the door, and walks firmly out into the brilliant sunshine. In that last glance I see his face is white as death, and I see also, before the door swings to, that Arthur has met him, that they stand within a few paces of each other. I clasp my hands in breathless horror, for I know not what will happen next. I see Arthur's cold, contemptuous look, and hear Bruce's scornful laugh; then I lose my senses, and am conscious of nothing more.

Presently I awaken, with a fearful pain in my head, and a weight upon my heart that almost stops its beating.

My love and grief appear almost like a dream to me.

I remember that Bruce was with me not long ago; that we spoke together, and kissed each other, and that in leaving he bade me a long farewell.

I wonder a little how long ago that was. Perhaps days have passed since then, and this is his wedding morning.

I have not strength to scramble down the hay tuusses, and go out unfalteringly to meet Arthur in that blazing sunlight, as Bruce did so long ago.

I open the trap window, and look down upon the meadow. Generally a small ladder stands by the window. It is used to reach the barn from that side of the farm. Fortunately it is there now, and directed against the window.

The warm world is very quiet as I descend slowly into the meadow, and commence to walk across it.

But the way seems very long.

Only the day-long noises of the summer trees, and birds, and insects, and falling water greet one.

Once the shrill tinkle of a sheep bell startles me; and twice, as I turn round to look across to the barn, I tell myself that I am dreaming, and shall presently awake.

Oh, that I might awake, and find myself in my own love's arms, safe and happy for ever!

"We were not born with true love to trifle,
Nor born to part because the wind blows cold;
What though the storm the summer garden rifle,
Still on the bough is left a leaf of gold."

Bruce has not forsaken me. Why, then, does that sad song haunt me so? True, my summer is over, because Bruce has gone; but the leaf of gold is shining over the wrecked sunshine and flowers of my heart's garden, and I should be happy, if not gay.

Yet the song echoes like a dirge in my brain.

When I reach the churchyard wall, I am too tired to go farther. I have left my hat in the barn, where I threw it down in the first outbreak of my grief. The sun beats unmercifully on my head; but the elms in the churchyard are all whispering together, and throwing their sweet dappled shadows over the mossy graves and paths.

The coolness and whispering boughs invite me to enter.

I open the little gate, and pass into the churchyard; and behold, fluttering slowly down the brilliant sunlight, from the elm tree's topmost boughs, descending in a divine message to me, to whom Nature is speaking because I understand her aright, the first golden leaf of autumn—the first dead, faded child of the summer. It falls at my feet, a silent emblem of my faith and trust in happy days to come. I kiss it passionately as I clasp it to my bosom. I feel triumphant, even in my grief.

"What though the storm the summer garden rifle,
Still on the bough is left a leaf of gold."

I seat myself mechanically upon the grassy grave by the gate, and everywhere about me are golden leaves, and golden flowers, and golden skies. My dress, my hands, the very ground I sit upon, the gate I grasp in my madness, are all gold, red, flaming gold. Figures are flying across the field, but they are golden statues moving. I cannot open my lips to scream—I am passive in an awful horror. Gradually I lose consciousness; my last sensation is that my identity is lost, my brain on fire, and I am doomed to an everlasting torture.

Russian and Turk.

PART I.—TURK.

THE first question for the Russians after the declaration of war is how to overcome Turkey's line of defence; in fact, how to cross the Danube. Turkey possesses a strong flotilla of armoured gunboats on the river, which, if properly handled, ought to considerably impede any operations carried on for the purpose of constructing a bridge, and inflict great loss by shelling the enemy from a distance. These vessels will also facilitate the landing of Turkish troops on the Roumanian shore, should it be decided to have a trial of strength on what may be termed enemy's territory, in a fight with the Russian advance guard. The difficulty of crossing the river, owing to these gunboats, has not been under-estimated by the Russian Government, and with a view of paralyzing their action, and protecting the operations for throwing over a bridge, a number of small torpedo-boats have been added to the equipment of the invading army. These boats are steam launches about thirty feet long, constructed—with the exception of one, which is of steel—of thin iron plating. They are fitted with engines of eight-horse power, and possess great speed. Being specially built with a view to transport by rail, they are exceedingly light for their size, and do not weigh, with their engines and fittings all complete, more than three and a half tons. They will probably be fitted with the spar torpedo, and their crews will trust to their speed to carry them alongside an enemy's

gunboat and away from it again, before the Turks will have sufficiently recovered their presence of mind to point a gun correctly, or even fire one.

As a protection against rifle-fire, these boats carry shields at each end, but there is nothing to prevent their being sunk by the fire of a great gun. Well manœuvred, under the command of bold and enterprising officers, these launches might become very dangerous to the Turks, and in any case are likely to prove a valuable auxiliary force, as they may be used, amongst other purposes, for carrying over the advanced guard.

Once at the river, the Russian army will be delayed until the bridge is constructed for the passage of the main body. Materials for a bridge have been collected in abundance at the town of Ismail, on the Kilia branch of the delta, and include both pontoons and boats, as well as the necessary timber. All this, however, will have to be transported to the point fixed upon for attempting the passage; and here, again, the Turkish gunboats will come into play, unless the torpedo-boats can drive them away.

The Russians, apparently, are feeling their naval inferiority, and would like to get a few larger craft than these launches on the Danube. They have a number of heavily-armed gunboats at Nicholaeff all prepared, and ready for sea at a moment's notice. It is probably the intention of the Russian Government to try and slip them into one of the mouths of the Danube. Should this design be carried out it would materially alter the state of affairs; but the Turks are taking their measures in time, and already a well-chosen squadron of small ironclads has left for the north, with orders to keep the strictest and closest watch possible over the delta. This squadron, which is under the command of Mustapha Pacha, consists of two heavily-armoured iron corvettes—splendid craft in their way—mounting guns of the heaviest description, twelve and a half ton muzzle-loading Armstrongs, in a battery so arranged as to admit of a fire being delivered almost in a line with the keel. These craft are the *Mukademieh Hhair*, or *Happy Beginning*, and the *Fethi Rulend*, or *Great Victory*; and in addition to them are the *Hiftzi Rahman*, or *Divine Protector*, and the *Lootfi Djellal*, twin screw ironclad sea-going turret vessels, carrying each of them four 150-pounder Armstrong guns.

For the moment, then, this is the naval force outside the river; and now a few words may be said about the squadron inside, which is under the command of Kiritlee Mustapha Pacha, an officer who has generally obtained credit for energy. The squadron on the river consists of some seven armoured gunboats, and a few small wooden steam vessels armed with light guns. The ironclad gunboats are all about 115 feet in length, carry each of them two breech-loading Armstrong guns (80-pounders) in a battery placed on the forepart of the deck, and are protected with two-inch armour. The remaining two are of very superior construction, carrying their two guns (80-pounder Krupps) in a turret placed forward.

The armour of these boats is sufficient to prevent the penetration of projectiles from field pieces, and they will be able, therefore, to move up and down the river, delivering a galling fire at any point

almost with impunity, unless the measures taken by the Russians to destroy them, or keep them at a distance, prove successful. Nothing is known as to whether the Roumanian authorities have connived at the placing of torpedoes in the river on the part of the Russians, though doubtless the latter will have thought of it, seeing how much the Federal gunboats were hampered in the southern rivers during the great war in America by the torpedoes placed by the Confederates. The Turks at one time thought of having recourse to these weapons, and placing them at every point on the Danube at all suitable for crossing; but there is reason to believe the idea has been abandoned.

The whole force for the defence of the Danube cannot possibly exceed 100,000 men, in addition to a force of 34,000 south of the Balkans, between Nisch and Sophia. These troops but a very short time ago were distributed between the various fortresses on the river, half the force stationed in about equal numbers at Silistria and Rustchuk; and the remainder, with the exception of a small reserve force at Shumla, concentrated at Widdin. The Turks have made the mistake, according to the best military authorities on the subject, of attempting too great a line of defence. They will be too weak to offer a successful resistance at any point where the Russians may attempt to cross. The bulk of the Turkish army will be shut up within fortresses which the Russians will only blockade, and not regularly besiege. There will thus be nothing to stop the march of the invaders to the plains south of the Balkans, and it may be to the gates of Constantinople.

The fortresses on the Danube have been repaired lately, and a few new earthworks erected at Silistria, Widdin, and Rustchuk, as well at one or two places in the Dobrudschha. Their armament has been changed within the last few months, and most of the batteries on the Danube now mount Krupp's guns of considerable calibre. The best chance for the Turks, according to foreign military authorities, would be to let the Russians cross over, while they themselves concentrated all efforts on the defence of the Balkans; but in their pride the Turks will not believe in the possibility of the enemy ever reaching the passes, and so there is reason to imagine that not so much attention has been given to the gates of the Roumelian plains as, from a Turkish point of view, ought to have been given.

Returning to the Black Sea, the same necessity does not exist for the Turks to defend their ports as is imposed upon Russia, owing to the former having the command of the Black Sea. They have a fine iron-clad fleet, sufficient in number possibly, when supplemented with their wooden vessels, to blockade, if necessary, the whole of the Russian coast. Properly watched, not a vessel ought to be allowed to escape out of a Russian port; and though there is a fine fleet of merchant steamers at its disposal, the Turks ought to be able to prevent the Russian Government from sending any supplies to its various *corps d'armées* except overland.

With enemy's vessels stationed here and there, and a squadron of fast-steaming ironclads sweeping round the shore, threatening the sea-coast towns, attacking the fortified posts, and destroying the Government depots as the Turks, if they understand the value of

their fleet, will certainly do, the Russians will have to retain considerable forces in the south for their own defence. Recent intelligence from Odessa declares that the army destined for this work consists of at least 270,000 men, of which 200,000 at the present time are in quarters near that town, the remainder being distributed in detachments along the shore to the northward and eastward, as far as the mainland on the other side of the Crimea. This is a large force, certainly; but ships have the advantage, in the present day, of steam, and can move about with far greater celerity than troops. Feints and threatened attacks upon certain positions with small portions of the fleet will serve to draw off the troops from other places, whilst the main body of war vessels is preparing for a descent upon the towns thus left only partially defended. This is the sort of work which would be undertaken by a British fleet in similar circumstances, and the Turks are supposed to have studied in the same school. They possess amongst the vessels of the ironclad fleet just the sort of craft to suit a dashing commander—vessels of light draught, heavily armoured, mounting guns of large calibre, and steaming well.

Two of the vessels in question have already left for the mouth of the Danube, and there are two others of precisely the same description lying at Battoom, the *Arni Illah* and *Mouani Zeffir*.

In addition to these vessels, there are four other armoured corvettes, called respectively the *Idjaleyah Arsari Tefyk*, *Arsari Shefket*, and *Nedjno Shefket*, which carry on the average eight heavy guns each, two of which, as a rule, are mounted on revolving platforms on the upper decks, for the delivery of "all-round fire." These ships, lying off a battery end on, could pour in a very destructive fire against a battery or other object as a target; whilst from their small size, and absence of heavy masts and sailing gear, they would present but a very small mark for the enemy.

These eight vessels do not form the whole of the strength of the ironclad fleet, as there are lying at the present moment at the mouth of the Bosphorus five large broadside ironclad frigates, one of which is one of the most formidable of her class afloat. She is called the *Messoudieh*, and having left the building yard of the Thames Ironworks Company only within the last two years, has had every recent improvement, and is even a finer vessel than the *Sultan*, which she closely resembles. She is protected by a belt of fourteen-inch armour, and carries fourteen twelve and a half ton guns, with two indented ports on either side, for firing fore and aft. The guns are protected by armour-plated bulkheads, and a double bottom; division into watertight compartments reduces considerably the risk of her total destruction by the explosion of the enemy's torpedoes. Unfortunately, she consumes an enormous quantity of coal, and so is hardly the ship for such active operations as I have sketched, though she would answer admirably for an attack upon a fortress or the blockade of a port.

Another vessel of exactly the same description and size is expected shortly from England; she is called the *Hamidieh*, in compliment to the Sultan; and as there are now but a very few thousand pounds to be

paid to complete the contract price, she will probably be delivered into the hands of the Turkish authorities in a few days. The four other ironclad frigates I have mentioned are of an old type, and only protected by plates of four and a half inches in thickness. They are the *Mahmoudieh* (now stationed at Batoom), the *Azizieh*, the *Orchanieh*, and *Osmarieh*. They carry each of them sixteen heavy Armstrong muzzle-loaders, and possess very good steaming qualities.

The whole strength of the Ottoman navy consists of fifteen ironclads, five wooden steam frigates, eleven wooden corvettes, two wooden gun vessels, and eleven gunboats, of which seven are armoured, and form the Danube flotilla previously described. There are thirteen large transports, six fast despatch vessels, and two Imperial yachts, besides a number of small steamers and wooden hulks. The official report places the total number of vessels of all descriptions at 132, manned by some 18,292 officers, seamen, and marines. Turkey, then, has, numerically speaking, one of the finest fleets in the world.

Mark Twain's First Experience in Journalism.

I WAS a very smart child at the age of thirteen—an unusually smart child, I thought at the time. It was then that I did my first newspaper scribbling, and, most unexpectedly to me, it stirred up quite a sensation in the community. It did, indeed; and I was very proud of it too.

I was a printer's "devil," and a progressive and aspiring one. My uncle had me on his paper (*the Weekly Hannibal Journal*, two dollars a year in advance, five hundred subscribers, and that paid in cord-wood, cabbages, and unmarketable turnips); and on a lucky summer's day he left town to be gone a week, and asked me if I thought I could edit one issue of the paper judiciously.

Ah, didn't I want to try it! Hinton was the editor of the rival paper. He was lately jilted, and one night a friend found an open note on the poor fellow's bed, in which he stated that he could no longer endure life, and had drowned himself in Bear Creek.

The friend ran down there, and discovered Hinton wading back to the shore. He had concluded he wouldn't.

The village was full of it for several days, but Hinton did not suspect it. I thought this was a fine opportunity.

I wrote an elaborately wretched account of the whole affair, and then illustrated it with villainous woodcuts, engraved on the bottom of wood-type with a jack-knife, one of them a picture of Hinton wading out in the creek in his shirt, with a lantern, sounding the depth of the water with a walking-stick.

I thought it was desperately funny, and was densely unconscious that there was any moral obliquity about such a publication.

Being satisfied with the effort, I looked about for other worlds to conquer, and it struck me that it would make good interesting matter to charge the



"STONES, EARTH, AND ROOTS GAVE WAY."—(Page 150.)

editor of a neighbouring county paper with a gratuitous piece of rascality, and see him squirm.

I did it, putting the article in the form of a parody on the "Burial of Sir John Moore;" and a crude parody it was, too.

Then I lampooned two prominent citizens outrageously—not because they had done anything to deserve it, but because I thought it was my duty to make the paper lively.

Next, I gently touched the newest stranger—the lion of the day—the gorgeous journeyman tailor from Quincy.

He was a simpering coxcomb of the first water, and the "loudest" dressed man in town. He was an inveterate lady-killer. Every week he wrote some poetry for the *Journal* about his newest conquest. His rhymes for my week were headed "Mary in H—l," meaning Mary in Hannibal, of course.

But while setting up the piece, I was suddenly driven from head to heel by what I regarded as a perfect thunderbolt of humour, and compressed it into a snappy foot-note at the bottom, thus:—

"We will let this thing pass, just this once; but we want Mr. Gordon Runnels to understand distinctly that we have a character to sustain; and from this time forth, when he wants to communicate with his friends in h—ll, he must select some other medium than this journal."

The paper came out, and I never knew anything to attract so much attention as those playful trifles of mine.

For once the *Hannibal Journal* was in demand—a novelty it had not experienced before. The whole town was stirred.

Hinton dropped in with a double-barrelled shot gun early in the forenoon. When he found that it was an infant, as he called me, that had done the damage, he pulled my ears, and then went away; but he threw up the situation that night, and left the town for good.

The tailor came with his goose and a pair of shears; but he despised me too, and departed for the South that night.

The lampooned citizens came with threats of libel, and went away incensed at my insignificance.

The country editor pranced in with a war-whoop next day, suffering for blood to drink; but he ended by forgiving me cordially, and inviting me down to the drug-store to wash away all animosity in a friendly bottle of "Fahnestock Lotion." It was his little joke.

My uncle was very angry when he got back—unreasonably so, I thought, considering what an impetus I had given the paper, and considering also that gratitude for his preservation ought to have been uppermost in his mind, inasmuch as by his delay he had escaped dissection, tomahawking, libel, and getting his head shot off.

But he softened when he looked at the accounts, and saw that I had actually booked the unparalleled number of thirty-three new subscribers, and had the vegetables to show for it, cord-wood, cabbages, beans, and unsaleable turnips enough to run the family for two years ago.

A Perilous Ride.

BEAUTIFUL Lomo—the island girl!

There she stood, in an attitude of bewitching grace, balancing herself on the balls of her little feet, one in advance of the other. Her long, bright black hair was unadorned save by a string of pearl-white hair beads encircling her soft brow; black eyes, full of pity, glowed in the beams of the setting sun with lambent fire; her regular features were full of sweet, kindly expression, as she gazed on him—John Langton, the poor castaway sailing-master, who had been borne to the island on a fragment of timber from the armed brig *Golden City*, which had foundered on the night before, in a heavy gale.

Bruised and half senseless, John Langton lay upon the beach, his thick, brown curls full of sand, shell, and seaweed, his tall frame weakened by suffering, his blue eyes wistfully upturned to the face of the girl by his side.

She had just come from a fragrant orange-grove, extending far along the island, to behold this helpless stranger lying upon a shore full of hostile savages, who, were they to see him, would at once strip him of his uniform, and cut him to pieces with spears and knives.

Lomo, although born here, was different from the rest. She had listened to the words of one who had come here, years before, to reform the savages, but who had eventually perished at their hands.

She knelt down by the prostrate man, and her sweet voice mingled with the tinkle of the waves, rolling upon the pebbly beach, as she addressed him in broken English:—

"Poor sailor! me help you."

She unfastened the cords holding him to the spar. Then she brought him cocoa-nut milk and juicy oranges.

These revived him wonderfully, and he staggered to his feet.

"Come," said Lomo.

"Ay, ay, my pretty one," he answered, faintly. "I should like to go where I could have a good, long sleep."

She led him to a deep cavern among some hollow rocks, hidden by a thick growth of brushwood, where she knew her people seldom penetrated.

She then made him a couch of bread-fruit leaves, upon which stretching himself, he sank into a deep slumber.

When he awoke, there was Lomo, sitting by the entrance of the cave, on the watch.

She had brought him, while he slept, food enough to last for several days. There were cocoa-nuts, some baked fish, and plenty of bread-fruit, which, being broken open, revealed the ripe, golden yellow colour inside.

John Langton made an excellent meal. Then he conversed with Lomo, who told him she had brought him here to keep him out of the way of her savage people.

Day after day passed, and, like the Juan and Haidée of the poem, the young man grew fond of Lomo, who also loved the handsome castaway thus put under her protection. For hours she would sit by his side, while he talked to her of his native land.

One day she came in, looking sad. She had been weeping.

"A sail—it come—this way!" she said, in answer to his questioning glance. "You part from Lomo."

"And why should we part?" he inquired, embracing her.

"You take me with you?" she cried, joyfully, clapping her hands.

"Yes; if you will go."

"Go? Oh, yes! glad go with you!" she answered, clinging to him.

"Have you signalled the vessel?"

"Yes; but not think ship see signal yet."

Ere he could respond, there was a yell, as if a thousand fiends had broken loose, and a crashing through the shrubbery.

In a moment, the cave was full of savages, armed with clubs and spears, and having great bunches of hair, coloured red, projecting from their heads.

They were led by a young chief, who had desired Lomo for a wife. The man had suspected her, and tracked her to the cave.

Now, his eyes blazing with jealousy as he gazed from Lomo to Langton, he motioned his followers to lower their spears, which they had been about darting through the sailor's body.

Screaming, Lomo clung to her white lover; but she was rudely torn away.

Then Rokor—the name of the chief—said something to his men, who at once seized the captive and bore him off.

They conveyed him to the top of a lofty cliff, overlooking the sea, and bound him with strong cocoa-nut cords to a large, loose rock.

He now comprehended their intention. They were to roll the rock, with him fast to it, down the jagged cliff, a distance of some two hundred feet, when the rock, bounding off a projecting ledge into the water, would carry his mangled remains to the bottom of the sea. A horrible fate!

He was a man of courage, but his heart sank at thought of such a doom.

Borne down the cliff, his death would be delayed several minutes, during which he must suffer the terrible pains of being cut, jammed, bruised, and pierced by the jagged points of rock projecting from all parts of the elevation.

Even when, at last, the rock should clash with him into the sea, he would still probably be alive, and have sense enough remaining to feel all the horror of perishing under water.

Prone upon his back, he suddenly heard the screams and lamentations of a female. With fiend-like cruelty, his captors raised him, so that he could see, far below, floating upon the sea in a canoe, poor Lomo, with clasped hands, and eyes upraised to the merciless savages, who had posted a guard near the foot of the cliff, to prevent her ascending to it. She was begging them not to carry out their purpose—to release the prisoner.

Langton could not bear to witness the island girl's distress. Her wails were heartrending to hear. He even feared she would become insane.

He endeavoured to make his captors understand this; but they heeded him not.

With a refinement of cruelty, such as no one but

a savage could have exhibited, they pointed to the vessel which Lomo had signalled for her lover—a large merchantman, rapidly approaching the island, with the American flag at her mizen.

Friends so near, and yet too far to save him!

He must die, with that ship before him, booming along toward the hostile shore, under a cloud of canvas!

This the ignorant savages had not foreseen, and their yells of disappointment split the air. On its upper surface, the rock was of globular shape, but beneath its surface was comparatively square, which would prevent its going over, until it should come in contact with some projection large enough to cause it to turn.

Not long was he permitted to gaze. The word was given. Twenty savages pushed the rock over the brow of the cliff, and away it went with the rapidity of an avalanche, crashing down the nearly perpendicular side of the precipice.

Feeling himself thus dashed along, he nerved himself to meet his fate.

Stones, earth, and roots gave way before the huge mass. The whizzing, rushing sound, and the tremendous velocity of the descending rock, confused and bewildered him. He was, however, conscious that he was still uninjured, owing to the fact that the rock had not yet rolled.

The effect upon the vision of Langton, as he was thus borne downward, was weird and appalling. The heavens seemed to leap up from the vast ocean, which, in its turn, seemed whirling upward, as if to drown earth and sky in a universal deluge. The approaching ship, to his confused, disordered gaze, meanwhile, seemed to fly toward him, masts downward, driving straight through the air, as if the great sea had hurled it like a thunderbolt from its bosom.

He saw the red sun shooting through the sky, pursued by dusky clouds, as if it were alive, and wild with fright at some terrible impending calamity of the universe. He struggled upon the rock, and felt as if he would go mad. His brain seemed ready to burst, his heart almost stood still.

Down—down—down!

The rock struck a protuberance, over it rolled, and Langton must have been terribly cut and mangled had he been carried with it.

His lashings, however, at that moment gave way, and he was whirled by the concussion backward over its edge, against the side of the cliff.

He had sense enough to clutch a projecting root, and to this he hung, watching the rock as it descended without him, until finally, with a tremendous splash, it bounded off into the sea.

He comprehended how he had been saved—knew that the lashings had been severed by contact with some sharp flints, as the descending mass rubbed against them.

Showers of spears, hurled by the natives above, whizzed past his ears; those below were mounting toward him.

There was no time to lose. He descended to the ledge, about fifteen feet beneath him, and sprang from it into the sea.

Lomo picked him up, and paddled towards the

approaching vessel, heedless of the shouts of her people as they sprang into their canoes to pursue.

"Save! save!" cried the island girl, embracing him, when the merchantman had taken them aboard.

The vessel tacked. The pursuing canoes faded in the distance, and Langton eventually arrived safely home with Lomo, whom he made his bride.

He educated her; she soon adopted the customs of civilized people; and to the day of his death he felt proud of his beautiful wife.

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER XXX.—A BRAVE BOY.

PATSEY'S loud cries for help had a very good effect: they astonished the bear, who had never heard anything of the kind before; and, to do the girl justice, they were wonderfully shrill.

The bear unclasped her waist, and the girl bounded to the house, found the door closed, and rushed to the side, where a short ladder was standing, up which she scrambled, and on to the shingle roof of the low house, dashing the ladder sidewise, so that it fell across the bear's back, making it give utterance to a loud, savage growl, and seize the ladder in its teeth, to give it a good shake.

The next minute, it began to walk up and down, growling in an angry manner, ending by sitting up on end, and gazing at the girl where she crouched, panting and blinking its red eyes.

"Oh, you ugly wretch!" cried Patsey. "And to think I could be such a little stupid as to think it was him come back. Why didn't you come when there was some one about the place, and not take advantage of a poor girl when she was all alone?"

"R-i-r-r-r-ur!" said the bear; and going to the angle of the house, made preparations for ascending to where poor Patsey crouched trembling like a leaf.

"Oh, what shall I do?" cried the poor girl. "Help—help! Will noboby come?"

Her cries were vain; for as soon as Mickey had taken his departure, he had set off running as hard as he could to overtake Wallace and Ruth Slocum, so that he was out of hearing in a few minutes. Jerry was fast asleep in his niche, and Si was far away by the side of the plain, watching for enemies and friends.

There seemed no hope for poor Patsey; indeed, her minutes appeared to be numbered, for the bear contrived to make good its foothold upon the corner of the house, when, as Patsey saw its great ugly muzzle approaching, she uttered another piercing scream.

The bear stopped and stared; but as he did so, a light flashed upon poor Patsey's troubled brain—there was help for her.

"Jack, Jack, Jack!" she cried with all her might; and at the last shout she heard a distant bark.

What followed seemed to take place as in a mist, for the girl's head swam, a film came before her eyes, and she threw herself back upon the roof to keep from falling.

For there was a rush, a hoarse growl, and Jack came helter-skelter at the bear, which, on the ap-

pearance of a new actor on the scene, began slowly to descend; but on Jack bounding up at him, and fixing his glistening teeth in the shaggy hide of his hind-quarters, he began to reascend, slipped, fell, and then rising to his feet, proceeded to turn upon his assailant.

It was labour in vain; for Jack had a knack of sticking where he fixed himself, and he held on to the bear, in spite of his growls and clumsy attempts to get at him, with all the tenacity of an English bulldog.

Jack had all the biting to himself; and at last, tired of making savage ineffectual snaps and futile efforts to claw, the bear started off at a clumsy trot, rushing right away for the wooded mountain side, and Patsey slowly lowered herself down.

"Oh, how dreadful!" whispered Patsey, "and nobody here to help me! Where's Freddie, I wonder?"

She ran into the house and searched, when the open window showed that he had escaped.

"He was frightened at the bear," she said, "and he's gone off to find his father. I'll go too."

Without a moment's delay, she rushed off to the track, and had hardly disappeared before an enemy far more to be dreaded than the bear appeared upon the scene in the person of Jake Bledsoe, who came running up to the ranch in full pursuit of little Freddie, the boy shrieking out for help in his horror of the savage-looking ruffian, who pursued him open knife in hand.

"Come here, you young whelp, or I'll cut you to pieces," he snarled, as the boy cleverly evaded his touch, his smallness giving him an advantage even, as it enabled the child to dodge round pieces of rock where the ruffian could not follow.

But at last Jake got the boy in a corner, and feeling now that he had him, he proceeded to frighten the life out of the poor little fellow.

"Now I've got yew, I guess," he said, grinning, as he felt the edge of his knife, and sat down, panting, on a block of stone; "but before I cut that there heart of yourn out and eat it, jess tell me this here, and if you tell any lies I'll—oh, I don't know what I won't do. First of all, what were yew doing out there by the mountain side?"

"Shooting squirrels," panted the boy.

"What? With that there little popgun?" said Jake.

"Taint a popgun," panted the boy; "it's a rifle."

"And what's in it?" said Jake.

"A bullet in a greasy patch," panted the boy.

"Oh, is there?" grinned Jake. "Well, now, look here, tell me direckly—whose ranch is this?"

"Father's," said the boy.

"And who's your father, eh?"

"Si Slocum," panted the boy, whose little eyes never left the ruffian face before him.

"Then I've been the first to find the place," muttered Jake, "and it's all right. So you're Si Slocum's cub, are you, young un?"

"I'm Si Slocum's son Freddie," said the brave little fellow; "and if you touch me, my father will shoot you dead, as he does the bears."

"Oh, will he?" said Jake. "Well, we'll see about that. Come here, you ugly cub."

The boy did not move, only crouched behind a

fragment of rock, watching the ruffian as if fascinated by his savage glare.

"Dyer hear? — come here directly," growled Jake.

The boy did not move; but his little face was white as ash, and his mouth seemed drawn down at the corners, as if he were about to cry.

"I'll cut you to pieces if you don't come!" roared Jake. "What, you won't come?"

There was no answer, but the boy crouched there, watchful as a wild cat, and ready to spring for his liberty.

"Then I shall fetch you," snarled Jake, rising. "And look here, if you try to run I shall throw my knife at you, and it will stick in your back and come out through your chest, and you'll fall down dead. I never miss."

The boy gave a sob, and then stood firm; while, fixing him with his eye, Jake Bledsoe began to climb over the stones that intervened between him and his prey.

"Cuss the young whelp!" he muttered, as he grazed one shin, "why don't he come out? There, now, I've got you at last, you dodging young 'coon. You come here."

He was not two yards from the boy; and, stretching out his hands so that the little fellow should not dodge away either to the right or left, he approached the stone in the corner, which acted as a breastwork to Freddie's defensive position.

The boy shuddered as he saw the horrible, great, gleaming knife, and in imagination felt himself being cut to pieces. The next moment he was quite firm, and awaited his adversary's attack.

"Now, yew won't dodge me no more, yer young—curse him!"

For at that moment there was a flash, a puff of smoke, and the sharp crack of the tiny rifle.

Jake started, dropped his knife, and clapped his hand to his shoulder, falling back at the same time over one of the blocks of stone that cumbered the place.

"He's shot me—bullet through the shoulder!" roared the ruffian. "But I'll be even with the cussed spawn yet."

Gathering himself up, he picked up his knife, and darted at the place where the boy had stood at bay.

But he was too late. Freddie had sprung to one side, and dodging from stone to stone, crept behind the house, and then run for the thick wood behind, into which he had plunged, to creep beneath the dense growth, and there lie panting, as he cautiously reloaded his little rifle.

"That shot 'll bring some one down here," muttered Jake. "What a fool, to be beaten by a boy like that! Curse him, he's his father's boy; but we shall be even with Mr. Si Slocum yet."

He gave a hasty glance round, and then, creeping cautiously away, he made for the mountain side, and was soon out of sight; and none too soon, for five minutes after, Si Slocum made his appearance.

The trapper gazed anxiously round, as if fully expecting to espy danger; and his anxiety increased as, in answer to his shout, no one replied.

He cocked his rifle, and gave his belt a hitch, so

as to bring knife and revolver more closely to hand, before going cautiously up to the house, and hesitating before entering the door.

It was not from fear, but so that his enemy might not take him at a disadvantage; and his heart beat fast as his imagination conjured up a score of fancies, in all of which he saw ill befal those who were most dear to him.

"Rewth!"

No answer.

"Rewth—Patsey—Freddie!"

This at intervals—a few moments between each call.

No reply.

Setting his rifle down, he drew out revolver and knife, and dashed into the house, to find all perfectly regular—not a sign of disorder; and he breathed more freely as he wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"There can't be nothing wrong," he muttered.

But he glanced carefully round, as if expecting to see foes spring from an ambush, while his keen eyes took in every object around.

"Shot been fired!" he exclaimed, taking a leap forward to where a drop of blood had fallen upon the rocky ground; and then, bending over it, he saw that it was still wet.

"There's something wrong," he groaned, as his eyes ran over the place, resting at last upon the fallen ladder; and going hastily up, he detected the rough scratches at the corner of the house made by the bear's claws.

He readily detected how far the beast had climbed, and then stood trying to puzzle out the enigma.

"Why, there's been a scuffle here, of course."

He applied his fingers to his mouth, and drew forth a long, piercing whistle, which was answered in a few minutes by a rustling noise, and Jack came bounding to his feet.

"Here, Jack, let's look at your muzzle," said Si, stooping down over the dog. "What, bloody!"

The dog gave a sharp bark.

"Jack, bear?"

The dog barked again, sharply.

"Yes, there's been a bear," said Si. "His mouth's got blood and hair upon it, and—eh, Jack, what is it?"

For the dog had broken from him, and was sniffing about, stopping at last by the drop of blood, to throw up his head and utter a whimper.

"That's not the bear, then, but something fresh," gasped Si. "Good God! why did I go and leave them all? Find'em, Jack, find'em," he cried to the dog, patting his back.

The dog looked up at him a moment, and snuffed about, threw up his head, snuffed about again, and then, with his head down, followed little Freddie's footsteps for a few moments; but they crossed the spot where the drop of blood lay, and this made the dog pause and double back in another direction, taking up now the track of Jake Bledsoe, running to and fro about the place; and at last, after pausing where Jake had paused, making straight off for the mountain, at a pace which caused Si to make use of his best efforts to keep up with him.

CHAPTER XXXI.—RUTH'S CAPTORS.

IT was a regular case of hide and seek; for Si had not been long gone before Ruth returned, panting and hot, after parting from Wallace Foster and Mickey Doran, when she had placed them well on the track, and pointed out the nearest way to the level plain where they had left Mr. Townsend and Kate.

"I thought I had better come back," she said, "so as to be ready for them when they come, poor tired, hungry things! But I'll send Si and Jerry to meet them, if I can find them. Patsey! Patsey!"

She called the girl's name again and again, but there was no answer; and, feeling alarmed at the silence, she ran into the house.

As she did so, half-a-dozen men, who had evidently been tracking her, came cautiously on, and at a sign from their leader darted under cover, one behind the rocks, another in the stable of Si's mustang; while two more got behind the house, and the others crawled amongst the trees.

The manœuvre was very cleverly executed; but Ruth's quick ears detected a sound, and she ran to the door, and looked about.

"It's very strange," she muttered; "no Patsey! But what nonsense, she can't be far off."

Ruth took a step forward, and turned towards the mountain track, looking wistfully in the direction from whence she expected her husband would come. Then, with an undefined sensation of uneasiness creeping over her—she knew not why, though an enemy was crouching close behind—she said, softly—

"I'll get my rifle, anyhow. It will do no harm to have it ready."

As she spoke, she was in the act of turning, when a figure, lithe and active as a panther, bounded on her back, nearly throwing her upon her face, while a couple of nervous arms pinioned hers to her side.

"All right, boys," cried Coyote Tobe, for it was he, "come out. Here's the hen-bird safe. Be handy with a lariat, one of you."

Ruth struggled fiercely, but without uttering a cry. Her efforts, though, were vain, and in a few minutes she was tightly, cruelly bound to the tree by their dwelling; her arms being dragged back round the trunk, while a thinner piece of hide-rope bound her wrists together so savagely that the blood nearly started from her finger-ends.

"There, that's made the hen-bird safe. Now for the old cock. Be on the look-out, boys."

The ruffians spread themselves about, some running into the house, and searching for such things as took their fancy, while Coyote Tobe seated himself on one of the rough stools in front of Ruth.

"Now, my dear," he said, "you are Mrs. Slocum, I suppose?"

Ruth gazed at him, with her teeth set hard, and for a few moments she made no response; but at last feeling, that silence could be of no avail, she nodded her head.

"Ah," said Coyote Tobe, taking out a revolver, and playing with the chambers, "that's better; but you must speak a little quicker, my dear, because time's precious. If you don't, I shall send a shot

into you here and there, to hasten your tongue. Women's tongues are not generally so slow."

He gave a glance round, and his companions uttered a laugh.

"Now," said Tobe, "we want your husband, my dear."

"What for?" said Ruth, slowly.

"What for, eh? Why, the fact is, my dear, we want to see him about a cattle transaction. Where is he?"

"I don't know," said Ruth, quietly, after a pause, during which she tried hard to think, calmly and coolly, as to what were best; but, poor woman, think as she would, she could arrive at no definite conclusion.

One moment she felt that she must gain time, and then perhaps help would come. The next it seemed to her cruel in the extreme; for if these wretches were to remain, Si, or perhaps little Freddie, would return, and fall into the trap, even as she had fallen herself.

It was a terrible position, and she felt at last powerless to do more than try to answer the questions put by the smooth ruffian who sat in front of her.

"I asked you," said Tobe, playing with the lock of his pistol, "where your husband was. Where is he?"

"I don't know," said Ruth again, quietly.

"It's a lie!" said the ruffian, flashing up into life, and the savage passions of his nature seemed to blaze from his eyes—"it's a lie. You do know. Where is he?"

He held the pistol up menacingly, and took deliberate aim at Ruth; but as she spoke he lowered the weapon.

"He is not in the mountains," she said.

"It's a lie," said Tobe again. "He's hidden—skulking round here amongst these rocks. Where is he?"

"If my husband was within reach" said Ruth, scornfully, "you would not be sitting there, but you and your coward crew would soon be scattered."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Tobe's companions.

"That's about true, as far as you go, Tobe," said one.

And they laughed again, as in spite of himself the ruffian darted an uneasy glance here and there amongst the rocks.

"You're a shrew," he said to Ruth, "and it would be doing your husband a kindness to get rid of you. Now, then, when will he be back?"

"I don't know," said Ruth, coldly, as she vainly thought about for some way of escaping from her dilemma.

"Yew do know," said Tobe. "Now, look here, woman," he continued, rising, and putting his face close to hers. "If you keep on telling me these lies, Si Slocum will come back and find you hanging to this tree, half cut to ribbons, same as we serve our niggars down South. If you tell the truth, we'll only quietly take you off to the mountains, and treat you well; and you'll have a jolly life there, eh, boys?"

"She just will," said one; "and she aint a very bad-looking woman, is she, lads?"

There was a low murmur ran round the little

circle, and Ruth's eyes dilated as she glanced from one to the other, and shivered at the words directed at her by her captors.

"Kill me, please," she murmured.

And her lips moved softly, as she closed her eyes, and prayed for deliverance from the wretches who seemed to gloat over her capture.

Coyote Tobe turned to his companions, and whispered with them for a few minutes, his remarks being evidently received by them with assent; while Ruth watched their lips, and tried hard to catch the words they uttered.

Then she glanced round in every direction that her bonds would allow, in search of help, or to utter warnings to any one who might be in danger of approaching the wretches who held her.

For poor Ruth now felt ready to offer herself as a sacrifice, that she might save the lives of husband and child, either of whom might be even now approaching.

She read it all now. Poor Patsey had been surprised by these wretches, and perhaps lay tied and gagged not far off amongst the bushes. They would probably carry her off too, but first of all they wished to get information about Si, so that they might trap him; and she vowed that she would sooner die than betray him into their hands.

"Now, look here, my gal," said Coyote, turning to her; "I don't want to be too hard on yew, but yew've got to tell us all about Si Slocum, and when he'll be back. We want him."

"What for?" gasped Ruth, trying hard to be calm, and speak coolly.

"Oh, never yew mind," said Tobe. "Yew won't want him any more. There's plenty of our fellows ready to take yew for a wife, if I don't choose to have yew myself; so don't you trouble. What's that?"

He paused, for there was a faint rustle not far away.

Ruth's heart seemed to stand still, and she strained her eyes in the direction of the sound. Was it Si? Dearly as she longed for help, she prayed heaven that it might not be.

"It's nothing," said one of the men. "There, look sharp with her."

There was another faint rustle, this time in another direction.

"There's some one about," said Tobe, in a whisper. "Spread around and see. I'll watch here. Come if I whistle."

The ruffians stooped, and went off cautiously in different directions, while Tobe gazed watchfully after them, as they slowly crept away.

The minutes that followed were agonizing, mentally and bodily, to Ruth, into whose flesh the hide-cord seemed cutting; but she did not move a muscle, nor take her eyes from Tobe, till, suddenly, Patsey appeared, rising up cautiously, not ten yards from where Ruth was bound.

The girl took in the danger in a moment, while Ruth cried to her, in a voice of despair—

"Run, Patsey, run! Warn Si of the danger!"

"Stop!" roared Tobe, presenting the pistol full at Patsey, who made a bound forward to obey her mistress's order, when the ruffian fired.

Patsey fell, and Tobe uttered a low laugh, as he proceeded to place another cartridge in his pistol before going up to the wounded girl.

"Pity to shoot such a pretty girl," he said to Ruth. "Some of our chaps would have been glad to marry her."

The rocks and trees seemed to sail round before Ruth, and she closed her eyes, but only to reopen them spasmodically, as the ruffian strode towards where Patsey had fallen amongst the bushes.

At the same moment sounds were heard from different directions, and the other scoundrels came running back.

"What is it?" they exclaimed.

"Only dropped a gal here," said Tobe, striding to the place. "You let her pass you. I dropped her here, and she has crawled under the bushes. Hunt her out."

The ruffians began to search about, parting the branches with the barrels of their guns; but they did not find the object of their search.

"Are you sure you hit her?" said one.

"I saw her drop, I tell you," said Tobe. "It was just here. Look, the boughs are broken."

Ruth shuddered as, in spite of herself, she watched those engaged in the search, expecting moment by moment to see them lift up poor Patsey's bleeding corpse, when, to her astonishment and joy, she saw the ruffians start, and raise their pieces.

"Ha! ha! ha! ha!" rang out from across the ravine a hundred yards away, and Patsey was seen running with the agility of a mountain goat.

"Fire! fire!" shouted Tobe.

And half a dozen pieces sent their bullets winging after the daring girl, who had dropped upon her hands and knees on seeing Tobe's weapon levelled at her, and crawled rapidly away, climbing down one side of the little ravine and up the other, hidden by the bushes, till she reached the path, when she sprang up and ran for her life.

The bullets pattered about her on the rock, but not one touched her; and, laughing derisively, she ran on at a speed that defied pursuit.

"Stop a moment," said Tobe. "Here, a rifle."

Not one was loaded, and by the time a bullet was forced down upon the powder the girl was out of sight.

"Couldn't we cut her off?" said one of the men.

"No, she knows the place too well, and she would hide," said Tobe, savagely.

"Let's get this one off, and get back to the captain, then," said one or two others.

Tobe nodded, and took a few steps towards Ruth.

Then he stopped, scowling at the ground for a few moments.

"No," he said, "she gave the alarm to that girl, and she'll only bring Mickey upon us, and give a fresh alarm."

"Nonsense," said one of the scoundrels. "We'll soon get her into camp."

"Not you," said Tobe, coolly. "We'll leave her behind, lads."

"What, now that we've caught her?" said one of the others.

"Silence," roared Tobe, cocking his pistol. "I'm Captain Vasquez's lieutenant, and in his absence I

take the lead. If we take this woman with us, we shall be taken by her husband at a disadvantage; for she'll betray us. So, Mrs. Slocum, say your prayers."

With no more compunction than if he had been about to take the life of a bird, Coyote Tobe, the most bloodthirsty and savagely cruel of the followers of Vasquez, raised his revolver, standing at four paces distant from the tree, and took deliberate aim at Ruth Slocum's forehead.

The Egotist's Note-book.

SIR FRANCIS GRANT, P.R.A., seems to pride himself upon the horses he paints; but oh, that pony, "Lady Whitworth," upon which Lady Victoria Leveson-Gower is seated, No. 263 in this year's catalogue! As Pat might say, it is quite evident that the animal would not stand still when she was being painted at full gallop. In fact, "Lady Whitworth's" hind-legs are in a position never before seen out of a toyshop, unless it happened to be upon a tavern sign.

Colonel Henderson has been writing to the manager of the Aquarium, and using the name of Mr. Cross, regarding the performance of "Zazel." The management are informed that unless the performance is stopped they will be looked upon as answerable for any accident that may occur. Mr. Robertson writes, in reply, that there is no danger, and publishes the testimony of the doctors to prove it. Moreover, he offers to blow Mr. Secretary Cross and anybody else who likes to go out of the gun by way of proving its safety. Poor Mr. Cross gets blowing up enough by the Opposition without testing "Zazel's" gun. By the way, the young lady is so fond of the feat that she shed tears when told that there was a probability of the proceedings being stayed.

Among other distinguished strangers who are likely to visit the country this spring may be mentioned one "Pongo," a remarkable gorilla, whose previous *habitat* has been in Berlin. He has been purchased for £2,000 by our Royal Zoological Society, and will henceforth be a shining light in the Regent's Park collection. His previous owner devoted immense time and attention to teaching him, and he will now feed at a table in a manner highly genteel and becoming. He has only one fault, but that detracts considerably from an otherwise good character. He is addicted to the use of strong liquors, and, when he can obtain any, too frequently becomes hopelessly intoxicated. Possibly Pongo may be induced to become a Good Templar when he visits our shores. Intoxication in a gorilla must be abominable. But stay, the Spartans made the Helots drunk as lessons to their young men. Why not keep Pongo for the same purpose? He would have a great effect on some men.

A sailor has been sentenced to ten days' imprisonment for taking off his shirt and placing it on the statue of Colonel Ackroyd in Halifax, and afterwards challenging the statue to fight. The man said he had

merely hung his shirt to dry; according to which, it must be surmised that the shirt was very wet. Whether that was the case or not, it is very certain that Master Jack had been imbibing strong waters till he was soaked to the wettest degree.

The Paris *Figaro* says that certain gratings in the Seine are arranged so as to catch the greasy particles that flow down from the sewerage. This grease is collected and utilized in the manufacture of soap. This, of course, accounts for the national antipathy to the use of soap. It is as natural as it is excusable. I wonder whence comes the soap of Naples and that of Castille, places where the people look as if they had never had a hearty wash in their lives?

The following application was made the other day to a board of guardians in the north of England for the post of schoolmaster:—

"GENTLEMEN—In making application I beg to say that I have been a puple Teacher in my youth. I am over 50 age and now want light employmennt My Characters state soberity steedness Perseverience from my late employers. I am able to teach Reading Writing part grammar Tinwell Arithmetic Part mensuration, Engineering and the sciences to some extent The Bible and new Testament Theology and Christian Principles. Gentlemen, I am Your Humble Servant, R.—T.—. Gentlemen I beg to say that I have no Certificat as a Schoolmaster as yet. I am percevering My Address is ——. Gentlemen I beg to say my age is 50 with no incumbrance or anything to Stop my Performing Your Duties if Required.—I Remain Your Faithful and Humble Servent ——. Able to improve writing."—Along with this document the writer sent two copies of what he termed "Old Chracter," from shipbuilding firms, one of which stated that he was in their "Employ as manager of Steam Crains," and the other that he had been an "Engnman." They appeared to be copied by the sender of the application.

A bachelor, given to observation, makes the following remarks about children:—

"Never ask them questions, but be always ready with a reply."

"Children are like birds; when they don't sing they shriek."

"Just in proportion to a child's growth, it becomes less like an angel."

THE morality of the business world may be considered at a very low ebb, when almost directly a new article has been introduced, and is by universal consent considered a success, worthless imitations of it appear. These imitators trade upon the reputation gained by the original invention, and if not narrowly watched bring it into bad repute. Imitations are in existence of the "New Patent Stocking Suspender," the only safeguard being the name of Almond stamped on every clasp and on the band. Every lady desiring health and comfort should provide herself with a pair of these useful articles, which may be obtained of Mr. H. J. Almond, 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, E.C. Ladies' size, post free, 3s. 2d. per pair. Size of waist required.

A Leaf of Gold.

CHAPTER V.

"GRACE, darling, will you lift the blind?"
"The sun will hurt you, love."

"Not now, I am so much better."

"Well, it must be a very little way, then. Will that content you?"

"Yes, that is pleasant. But why are we not at home?"

"You have been ill so long, my darling, and we thought it would be better for you to leave Weldon for a time; and this is such a pretty place, as you will find when you are strong enough to go out."

"Have I had brain fever, that you cut my hair off? I hope you've saved it all, anyhow."

"I have it all safely under lock and key. The doctors think it was a sunstroke. We found you senseless, at the meadow gate, without your hat, and the sun was shining fully down upon you."

I shake my cropped head, sadly. I can remember nothing of it.

"And you two are married?" I say, after a little pause, in which Grace draws down the blind again, and seats herself by my side. "And you had no wedding dress or bridal party? Oh, Gracie, that was too bad!"

"It was a matter of necessity, dear; for you would not let any one approach you but myself in your worst days of illness; and after the fever left you, you could not travel alone, and Arthur in his trouble naturally looked to me."

"Dear Arthur, why does he not come to see me? Is he here now, and are you very, very happy?"

"Arthur stayed with you a long time this morning. Do you not remember a little about that? He has gone to the market, to buy you some flowers."

"I suppose I went to sleep after he left me. You know, Grace, I forget everything after I go to sleep."

Grace leans over me, and strokes my forehead with her white fingers.

"Not everything, darling. You have never forgotten that Arthur and I are married."

"It does not seem difficult to remember that, Grace, because I was so much astonished when you first told me: it seemed the most wonderful thing I ever heard in my life."

I laugh heartily. I cannot tell what it is that seems to provoke my mirth so constantly when thinking of Grace's marriage; but the merrier I am, the sadder and quieter she grows.

"Never mind," I say, still laughing feebly, as I lie back among my pillows; "you shall have a grand wedding in three months, when you have earned a name and fame in the great city."

But Grace sits quietly, and does not answer. She may be weeping, for all I know. Perhaps they are her tears that she so often and silently wipes away. But I fall asleep, and know no more.

One morning I become conscious that I am in a garden, a very beautiful garden. The sunlight reaches me through the golden glimmer of green leaves, and birds are singing everywhere about me.

It is full summer, only balmier and sweeter than I ever before experienced it. Thousands of flowers are blooming in gay parterres, and the rich old walls that enclose the garden are heavy with golden apricots, and purple plums, and luscious clusters of grapes.

I am lying on a mossy bank, in the dense shade of a fine old cedar tree. The air is so deliciously soft and fragrant, that I look around me with amazement and fear. Am I a spirit in another world? My dress is white; the flowers, the air, the birds—surely they do not belong to earth? Who will tell me that I am not transported to the isles of the blessed?

I spring to my feet, and fly with the speed of lightning down the broad green path in front of me.

Two figures are walking forward to meet me. They are Grace and Arthur. With a burst of tears and glad words of recognition, I fly to Arthur's arms, and hide my face on his breast.

The rest is oblivion.

Gradually I grow accustomed to the fine old garden, and I am very happy to be always in it with my loved ones.

I have never forgotten Arthur from the day I recognized him, when my mind was so distraught with fear.

All day long I roam through cool shrubberies and shady groves, singing, as is my wont, among the flowers and fountains; and at night I watch the sun set in unimaginable glories of gold and azure. I watch the stars come out in the vanishing light, and the dim, grey flowers grow dark in the fragrant dusk of the long twilight. And I sleep in a small, white bed, over which hangs a picture of the Virgin; and exactly opposite there is a lattice window, with a trailing vine about it.

There are wooden chairs and low, mossy seats in the garden, and a turnpike road runs past the wall in front of the house, for the garden is elevated; and there are two curiously twisted iron gates, that lead a flight of broad steps. These steps are so old, they are brown, and mossed over by neglect and time.

Sometimes I stand by these gates, and watch the people who pass to and fro from the town and country.

I can see, away in the distance, little white villages and picturesque snatches of hill and dale. There are rows of apple trees in full, rich beauty. The apples are larger and redder than any I have seen before. A little silver river winds about the valley, and shimmers and sparkles when the sun suddenly lights it up with a fleeting splendour; and low-lying meadows and corn fields, too, I can see; and the gabled roof of the curé's house, and its mullioned windows; and the corn wains that all day long go to and fro, laden with the wealth of the district.

Pretty, dark-eyed children cluster about the steps when I am there. They laugh and chatter like so many magpies, and I cannot understand them.

Sometimes I call to them, and drop flowers and fruit through the iron bars; and they scream and laugh, and blow kisses to me, with thanks as eloquent as eyes and smiles can make them.

Arthur and Grace are constantly with me; but

they are not like the Arthur and Grace I once knew.

They are so sad, and Grace looks pale and anxious, and never smiles as she used to do in the old days.

Alas, I know nothing of the old days, only I feel that we have all changed, and not for the better; and often, when I am wandering idly about, with the birds and butterflies for my only companions, I suddenly forget them all, and, dropping the flowers with which my arms seem always full, I turn appealingly to the lonely scene around me, and ask dreamily, what it all means, and how it will all end.

Grace and I talk very much together, but conversation quickly slips my memory; and although I am conscious of a new dawn of recollection in myself, yet I cannot speak of it to her. I have not power to express myself plainly enough to be understood.

In a dim, vague manner I understand this, and know that day follows day in like fashion.

"What makes you knit your brows so, Isabel? I have seen you do that often lately."

Grace says this one morning, as she stands at my dressing-table, and plaits her beautiful hair in my company.

"There is something I am always trying to remember, since I heard that pretty Italian girl sing on the steps the other day, and I cannot think at all without knitting my brows."

"Do not try to think, Belle—not even a little bit. You will remember everything soon, when you are stronger, and you are growing stronger every day."

"How long is it, dear, since I was first ill?"

"Three months, I believe. Yes, it is at least three months."

"Three months!" I echo. "Something was to happen in three months; I wonder what it was?"

"Leave it to me to find out," answers Grace; "tomorrow you shall know all about it."

"You promise a great many things you don't perform," I say, doubtfully; "but I believe you mean well, so I'll trust you once more."

Grace drops her shining plaits, and catches me in her arms.

Her eyes eagerly read my face. She suppresses her emotion, although she turns quite white with the effort; and, releasing me without a word, great tears fall on the muslin-draperied dressing table. I sit on the corner of the bed, and wonder silently.

No idea of the truth ever suggests itself to me.

I think Grace is not well. She never used to be hysterical. Also she never used to be so kind to me—I mean so indulgently kind. But then she never was so sad, and pale, and quiet.

"Why don't you laugh, Gracie?" I say, with a smile. "You have never laughed since you were married."

"You have been so ill, darling."

"But I am well now; and that reminds me you were not married properly, so that is why you are unhappy. Would it not be grand to have a wedding here?"

"Oh, no, Belle, one should never be married out of one's own country; and you promised me the

emerald bracelets and lace veil to wear when we went home."

"Then let us go home at once."

"Do you wish it, really? Do you remember Welldon? The fields and the church, the cottage, the roses and elms, and the dear old wood? Do you remember them, Isabel?"

"That is not all," I cry, in agony. "Tell me all—all, or I shall go mad."

She does not answer, and I throw myself at her feet.

"Grace, be merciful. I would not thus torture you. What is it you keep back from me? I will have it. I will remember. In remembering that, I shall remember everything."

I cling about her, pleading as for my life. I cry aloud, I rave, I pray. What I long to know is so near me, it trembles on the very verge of my memory. A word, a look almost, would lift me out of this dim border-land of forgetfulness into the full light of restored consciousness.

Yet Grace does not speak it.

And I am lost.

One morning, I rise earlier than usual, and go into the kitchen, to find Justine, my little maid. She was very busy, polishing the shining pans that made this kitchen such a marvel to me. She was all alone, and I sat in the old, cosy rocking-chair, and let her talk to me as she worked.

She talked English well, and with a pretty French accent.

"It was early for mademoiselle to rise—oh, very early. The dew was still on the grass, and everybody was supposed to be fast asleep; and Susy (the other servant) was going to be married, and it was a *fête* day, did mademoiselle know?"

"No, she did not," I said.

Susy was to be married in the grand church down the town, the French girl told me. It was to be a fine wedding, and the new servant would not come until the evening; so it was but right that she (Justine) should get up early, and help poor madame with the work. And would mademoiselle spare some of her flowers to decorate the church? Perhaps she would graciously go to the wedding; for Susy was marrying a very respectable fellow, and he had seen mademoiselle wandering in the garden, and thought she was an angel.

So Justine chatted, and polished the pans, and dusted the kitchen; and presently Madame Mercier came down, and released Justine; and I left them both, and went into the garden. Somehow, I imagined it was I who was going to be married, and I was in a very fever of excitement when Grace joined me.

I resolved not to tell any one until The Douglas came for me.

I must put on a white dress, flowered with gold, and adorn myself with flowers and jewels, as the brides of yore were wont to do; and Grace ought to be my bridesmaid, for our old friendship's sake.

"Isabel, what is the matter with you this morning? You are like a restless bird, fluttering about."

"I am going to be married!" I cry.

And feeling my secret to be no longer oppressive

to me, I clap my hands, and dance round her in a very ecstasy of joy.

"And will you leave us, Isabel, and this garden, and the doves, and the flowers you love so well?"

I feel so angry at her sad, low voice and pale face that I will not answer her.

"What makes you wish to be married?" Arthur asks, presently.

"It's decree'd," I say; "and we cannot alter our fate."

"Never?"

"No, never.

"Four grey walls and four grey towers,
Overlook a space of flowers;
And this silent isle embowers
The Lady of Shalot."

"But the four grey walls did not prevent her looking down to Camelot."

Arthur turns to Grace, and holds her hand firmly. A bright smile comes into her sweet face.

"Where did you learn so much wisdom, Isabel?"

"Oh, I know," I answer, laughing.

"A bow shot from her bower's eaves,
He rode among the barley sheaves,
The sun came dazzling through the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Launcelot."

"And she looked after him, and the curse fell upon her, and she died. Are you sorry for her, Belle?"

"No, indeed; she must have been tired of her solitude, and that dreadful unsatisfactory loom. Fancy how terrible, to weave pictures constantly of the man you love, and never to get any nearer to him! Death was a happy release for her."

A sadness, as of death itself, comes over me. I fall upon the mossy bank, and cover my face with my hands.

No one comforts me. A soft-throated bird twitters to me from a drooping elm bough, and the little flowers in the grass smile at me with their kindly eyes. I stretch my arms out, to embrace all the tender things of Nature that have been so long my heart's happiness and delight; and, falling with my face downwards, the bitter pain and sudden sorrow lose themselves in a world of fresh dawning fancies; and again I am to be married, and fame and fortune are mine, and the three months of trial are ended.

It is late when I go indoors to breakfast. Justine declares she has been looking everywhere for me; and Susy is dressed, and has already gone to the church, and I must run if I would not lose sight of the procession.

But Grace relieves Justine from her charge of me, and draws my little chair to the window, and waits upon me with her own sweet, loving hands.

"I am so strong to-day," I say, "only so full of fancies. I believe I have lived many lives before this one, for there is nothing in this life to make one feel so unutterably sad."

"It is part of your illness, Isabel, and your eyes look very large to-day. Drink your coffee, and then I will tell you of something that will please you. How would you like to ride in an open carriage

through the town, and to the next village? You have never seen a *fête* day in France."

"And put off my marriage?"

"Isabel, do you not jest a little with me sometimes? You do not seriously believe you are to be married?"

"Some one is to be married, Grace—and in three months—success and fame."

"My darling, this is some dream haunting you as a reality."

"No, no, Grace, there is a reality that haunts me as a dream, and this is in some way connected with it. If I could only remember that, I should have gained solid ground from which to grow better."

"How sensibly you do talk to me now," says Grace, "and you look so like my own Isabel. Your many fancies do not distress me as they would others, because I trace through all of them the working of your dear little imaginative mind, and I think you are stronger than we imagine."

"Am I very imaginative and foolish?"

Grace takes me on her knee, and folds her arms round me.

"You have always lived in a dream of your own, Isabel; and to you the maidens and heroes of romance have been more real than most of the men and women about you. How often have you watched with Elaine, and wept with the Bride of Lammermoor, and imagined yourself a Duchess May, or an Ellen, or a Rosalind! To-day, because you are not strong, you let yourself be monopolized a little more than usual by these people whom you love so well; but I doubt if your dream world is any intenser than it ever was. It is you who are weaker."

"That explains my fantasy, Grace, but not my sadness. When I am most myself, as you know, then I am the most restless and unhappy."

"That I do not understand either, darling; but Arthur and I both believe, despite the doctor, that a more varied and active life would be better for you than this one, in which your fancies have opportunities to become all predominant. What do you wish yourself?"

"I have no wish, dear; but sometimes I think longingly of home, and I should like to see the dear old place again."

"Maud Rutherford called here yesterday, but you would not speak to her; now, if that were to happen in Weldon, every one would notice it."

Grace speaks with a shade of reproach in her voice.

"I did not know the lady," I answer, indignantly; "and why should I have to endure visits from strangers?—in my state of health, too. She forced herself into my presence, and I did not feel inclined to speak to her."

"Civility is a duty we owe to each other, Belle; and nothing can excuse a lack of it towards strangers."

Grace has been quite like her old self during the last few days: she has scolded me continually.

"I am sorry, dear, and will behave better for the future. Why not ask this lady to ride out with us to-day? And, oh, Grace, Susy must be married by this."

"Very likely, Isabel; indeed, I hope so; for

Justine's head seems turned by all this excitement. Suppose we put on our hats, and watch for the carriage ourselves?"

A soft step is heard outside; a low, rich voice demands entrance. Grace springs forward and opens the door, and leads a lady, magnificently attired, into the room. There hardly seems space enough for her silken trailing skirts, and the wonderful flash of her jewels; yet she kneels by my side in the cosy little bay window of our breakfast-room, and takes my two small hands in her elegantly gloved ones.

"Isabel, do you not know me?"

I glance triumphantly at Grace.

"I am sorry I did not feel well enough to talk to you yesterday," I say, with what courtesy I can; "but perhaps you will do us the favour to ride out with us this morning?"

"Isabel, do you not remember me? I am Maud—Maud Rutherford, who lived at the Hall—"

But Grace stops her abruptly.

"Do not speak to her of Weldon, Maud; she has a way of getting very excited. Last week—"

But they leave me alone, and converse together on the threshold of the door.

The lady's face is very lovely, and very earnest.

"Oh, do, do let me try, Grace. I do not care what any one says; she will never suffer from what I will tell her. Her memory sleeps, that is all, and her morbid fancies have swallowed up her outward life; but love will work the cure for her. Oh, believe me, and let me bring him, or let us take her to him; and then, if she remains impassive, I will cease to urge you further."

"Let us wait until Arthur returns."

"No, no; he would be afraid."

"But if Bruce were too hasty? If the shock were too great? Oh, no, Maud, I dare not think of it."

"Trust me, Grace, as indeed you may from your knowledge of me. I have arranged everything to disclose itself gradually, and Bruce will obey me to the last detail."

They retire farther from the room, and I cannot hear longer what they say. But my mind is slowly awaking, and everything around me is as a dream.

Justine returns from the wedding, and chatters unceasingly about it, and the town, and the music, and the coming festivities in the evening. Grace, pale as death, reproves the girl's incessant gossip; but I hear nothing of it. Something of far greater import is about to happen. I let myself be dressed for my drive, and enter the closed carriage without a word.

"You are tired, love," says Grace at last. "And yet your eyes are bright."

"I am trying to remember," I murmur, sadly. "Oh, Grace, if I only could remember!"

"You shall, Isabel," says our lovely companion, "if any power on earth can make you do so. I am taking you now to one who will cause you to remember everything."

I keep my eyes fixed upon the lovely face of the speaker, and, closing them occasionally, I find her image in my mind a living, breathing reality. When I look at her she is strange to me; when I close my eyes, I know her well.

The carriage enters a deserted courtyard, and

stops before a grand old gateway, at which a picturesque girl sits, feeding a flock of doves.

The slow-stepping horse of our carriage does not frighten either doves or girl away. The birds spread their wings, however, and cluster about the roof of the house as we dismount from our clumsy vehicle.

The girl curtseys prettily, and opens the gate, and my two companions silently enter.

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER XXXII.—A LITTLE HERO.

RUTH SLOCUM did not for an instant blench. She felt that her hour had come, and that by meeting her fate bravely she might indirectly save the lives of her husband and child. So, looking the scoundrel full in the face, she awaited the deadly shot.

"Plucky woman!" said Tobe, with all the refinement of cruelty in his nature, witnessing the torture of her he intended to slay by taking a quiet, long aim.

And even as she gazed along the pistol barrel full in the ruffian's eye, Ruth saw their happy home made desolate, her husband returning down the mountain side, perhaps with her brave boy, to find her bleeding—dead.

"Poor Si! God help you in your distress," she said to herself; and then she started back into life, for one of the ruffians cried—

"Best not fire again, I guess. We shall have some one on us."

"Let him come," snarled Tobe, with the angry grin of the prairie wolf whose name he bore; "he shall find something to look at for shooting down our fellows."

"Be quick, then," said another.

"Yes, I'll be quick," said Tobe; "but I want to do my work neatly, right between the eyes."

He lowered and raised the revolver, again taking a half-step back as he did so, and a light seemed to blaze from his eye into that of the unfortunate woman, as he now held the pistol firmly, whereas a moment or two before his hand had shaken.

"One—two—three—fire!" he said, hoping the while that Ruth would plead for mercy.

But she never moved. Her face was like marble; and at the moment her prayer was that the shot might end her misery on the instant.

"One—two—three—fire!" said Coyote Tobe, distinctly, and with a savage coldness in his voice.

With the last word he drew the trigger; but the report of his revolver was mingled with the sharp crack of a rifle, whose bullet was so slightly in advance of his own that it struck his hand, jerked up the revolver, and, continuing its course, ploughed his arm from wrist to elbow.

"Thousand furies!" he roared, dropping the revolver, and starting back.

"Run, lads, run!" was the cry.

And the whole party fled, dashing into the rugged wooded mountain wilderness, their steps being hastened by bullet after bullet, which came whistling after them, cutting the twigs above their heads as

they ran, believing themselves to be pursued by a strong party.

Could they have looked back, matters might have ended differently; for, rushing forward after discharging his rifle with so true an aim, Freddie passed his mother, caught up Tobe's revolver, and resting its barrel on a block of stone, he fired the shots which lent speed to the ruffians' flight, cocking the fatal weapon with difficulty, and flinching as it kicked at each discharge in a way that almost numbed the muscles and nerves of his little arm.

"Are you hurt, mother?" cried the little fellow, running back. "Oh, the great cowards, to run from me."

"My brave boy—my brave boy!" was all the poor woman could utter for awhile, as she now nearly fainted away.

"He did not hit you, did he, mother?" said the boy, tugging at the knots which bound her, with hands and teeth.

"No," panted Ruth; "I am unhurt, boy. Freddie, can you get the knots untied?"

"No, mother," the boy cried.

"A knife, quick—a knife!" cried Ruth.

Freddie pulled his own knife from his little belt, and set to at the bonds which secured his mother to the tree; but it was some time before he could get through the hard thongs, and when he did, poor Ruth fell forward upon her knees, with wrists and ankles helpless from the arrested circulation.

In a few minutes, however, she recovered, and struggling up, she caught the boy's arm in her hand, and darted into the house, after securing the rifle and revolver.

"Freddie, we must shut ourselves in, and fight for our lives," she cried to the boy, as she secured the door. "Load your rifle, while I get mine; for those wretches will soon be back to attack us, when they find they are not pursued. But your father, boy, have you seen him?"

"No, mother. But did you see the horrible man who ran after me, and was going to cut me up?"

"Was it one of those that you saw here just now?"

"Oh, no! oh, no!" cried the boy. "It was a great, ugly, hairy man, and I shot him before I ran away and hid myself."

By this time they were safely ensconced in the house, with ammunition at hand, and their rifles resting by a couple of loopholes Si Slocum had cut for defence.

One hour—two hours glided by, and then there was an alarm, for Freddie declared he heard a footstep.

He was quite right; for directly after Jerry came into sight, shouldering his long gun, having woke up from a hearty sleep not long before.

"It's Jerry," cried the boy. "Come in quick, Jerry."

"Have you seen your master, Jerry?" cried Ruth, as soon as the black was inside.

"Not since de early time when he set me keep watch, and not soul pass ebber since."

"Did'n't you see Patsey?"

"No, missus, not seen Patsey."

"Nor me go by with Mr. Wallace Foster and the man?"

"'Struth, no, missus! Nebber see nobody 't all; and I watch, watch till de eyes nearly fall out ob me head."

"Jerry, you're telling me a lie," cried Ruth, and catching the black by the collar, she shook him till he fell upon his knees. "You've been asleep."

"Strue as goodness, missus, I never been asleep, but watch, watch, watch all a time."

"It's not true, Jerry; you've been asleep."

"No, no, missus; Jerry been wake as wake all a time."

"Did you hear the firing?"

"De firing?"

"Yes, the firing."

"Why, dere now, dat's what woke me up, and I nebbet able make out what de matter."

"Then you own you were asleep, sir?"

"Wal, missus, I tink I shut one eye, only one eye, five minute."

"Jerry, you ought to be ashamed of yourself," said Ruth. "It's a wonder you did not come back and bring your poor mistress and Freddie here shot to death."

"Oh, lor', missus, don't say so!" said Jerry.

"And lying in their blood."

"Oh, missus, missus, missus," cried Jerry, bursting out into a regular howl, with the big tears running down his cheeks, "you break poor Jerry's heart. What um do if dat lubbly boy get hurt? Jerry nebbet same man nor any other man again. Oh, lor, oh, lor!"

"It was too bad of you, Jerry," cried Ruth. "You, who ought to have protected your mistress and the child, to go to sleep and leave them to be attacked by a set of ruffians."

"Was you 'tacked?" said Jerry, earnestly.

"Yes, by six wretches; only little Freddie here shot one, and drove the rest away."

"You shot one, buoy?" said Jerry, opening his eyes and mouth, as he stared down at the child.

"Yes, I shot two," said Freddie.

"What, wiv dat dah little rifle?"

"Yes, Jerry."

"Oh, lor! An' I got big, long gun like this hyah, an' not shoot nothing. Golly, what I been 'bout? Oh, lor', missus—dah, I spect I nebbet go to sleep 'gain long as I live. I feel dreffle shame myself. Oh, golly! You shoot two rowdy wiv dat little rifle! Oh, missus, aint Jerry made dis hyah a wonderful little buoy!"

"Hush!" whispered Ruth; "be ready, but don't fire till I tell you. There is somebody coming."

Jerry thrust his long piece through the hole in front of him, and Ruth stood watching attentively, with her boy at her side.

Steps were heard plainly enough, and, in spite of herself, Ruth trembled as she thought of her weakness; but directly after, her woman's determination to fight for her offspring to the last gasp reasserted itself, and she held her rifle ready.

A minute later, and there was a familiar bark, Jack bounding up to the cottage, and Si Slocum hurriedly ran up to the front.

"It's father! it's father!" shouted the boy; and in another minute Si was locked in his wife's arms.

"Oh, Si, safe back!" was all she could say.

"But you—Patsey—where were you?" exclaimed Si.

Explanations followed, Si hearing for the first time of the coming of Wallace Foster and Mickey.

"They must be lost in the mountain," said Si. "It seems so easy to us, but they would easily go astray."

"They may come yet," exclaimed Ruth.

"Rewth, my gal," said Si, "seems as if the place was surrounded by danger. We tried hard to run one of the wretches to earth, Jack following the scent after finding the spot of blood."

"I thought I hit him, father," said Freddie.

"Yes, my boy, you hit him; but we lost the track, and came back here, hoping to find that my fears were not true. What am I to do now, Rewth?"

"You must not venture away, Si," exclaimed Ruth.

"But Patsey—that poor girl with her father and lover? They may have been taken by these wretches, and the men murdered. What am I to do? It is horrible! Oh, Rewth, Rewth, they might have left us at peace!"

"Spect I'd better go up Randan Gulch, an' fetch twenty miner come fight for us," said Jerry.

"No, Jerry; yew would be shot down before yew got halfway," said Si, sorrowfully. "Yew must stay and help defend the ranch."

"Jerry gib um drefle hot someting when dey come," said the black.

Ruth stood holding her husband's hands in hers in their little stronghold, watching the last rays of the setting sun playing upon the mountain, while darkness was fast stealing into the nooks and depths of their pleasant vale.

All was so peaceful and beautiful, that it seemed hard to believe it possible that such a blood-thirsty crew could be lurking about, ready to destroy the work of Si Slocum's hands, and to turn his little home into a wilderness.

At last, after they had stood watching there for some considerable time, and twilight had fallen, Ruth seemed to have come to a determination.

"It is hard to let you go, Si; but it would be horrible to know that those poor creatures were wandering about there in the dark, suffering now, perhaps, from hunger. Patsey will find her way back safely enough, but they must be in danger. Go, then, and be careful. Recollect, if anything befalls you, my life is not worth having."

"Yes, it is," said Si, gravely, and he pointed to the boy.

Ruth gave a sob, and pressed her husband's hand convulsively. The next moment all trace of weakness had gone, and she stood up the true, firm wife of the western trapper.

"Si, you must go," she said. "Try and find them: it is your duty. And besides, if you bring them in, we shall have three strong men to help our little party."

Si hesitated for a moment, his busy mind calling up a score of horrors, amidst which he saw his home burning and the body of his wife lying dead and disfigured amongst the ruins.

"Yes," he said, "I must not leave them to their fate. I'll go."

He tightened his belt, caught up his gun, whistled to the dog, to whom he trusted to give him a warning against danger, and then, after a few words of warning to his wife to be watchful against attack, the door was opened, and with Jack running before him, he strode away through the fast gathering darkness towards the mountain.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—A THUNDERBOLT.

WE left Mr. Townsend's party setting forth on their way towards Si Slocum's ranch; but limited as was the distance, they found to their dismay that they could easily lose themselves.

Eminence resembled eminence, and valley seemed to repeat itself after valley, in the most confusing manner. Now they felt sure they were traversing a little pine wood for the second time; but were obliged soon after to give up that idea, fostered as it had been by the great towering trees, and own that they were in quite a fresh part of the range.

The way was so intricate, and the ravines doubled about in so maze-like a fashion, that they more than once stopped in confusion; while, over and over again, they had to retrace their steps after following the course of some little valley which promised to lead them to easier land, to find it take them up to a *cul de sac*, out of which nothing but sheer climbing performed by mountaineers could extricate them.

Kate was patience itself, and, though faint and hungry, she had always a smiling face to turn to those around her; while they tried hard for her sake to keep up their spirits, and laughingly asserted, again and again, that the very next turn would bring them full in sight of Si Slocum's ranch.

One thing, however, did tend to encourage them, and that was the wonderful richness of the mountain sides; for every now and then Wallace paused to point out to Kate and Mr. Townsend the rich lodes of metal in the denuded rock.

At last it was arranged that Mr. Townsend and Kate should shelter and rest themselves in a cluster of great odoriferous pines, during the heat of the afternoon, while Wallace and Mickey went forward to try and discover the ranch, which, like a will-o'-the-wisp, seemed ever to elude them.

"Don't go away and forget where we are, Wallace," said Kate, laughing.

"Oh, no," was the reply; "this towering clump of pines is a landmark no one can miss. I say, Mr. Townsend, this is fine, being such a great landed proprietor, that I lose myself on my domain."

"Pray find the ranch somehow," said Mr. Townsend, "or I shall faint, or be starved to death."

"Don't doubt me, sir," said Wallace, laughing. "It must be close here. But mind, you are not to leave this spot on any consideration. We shall soon be back."

He started as he spoke, turning again and again to wave his handkerchief to Kate, who stood at the foot of a mountain pass, her slight, lightly-clad figure scarcely seen as he descended into the valley against the ruddy, pillar-like trunk, which supported a canopy of dark-green foliage.

Wallace carefully noted the various points around, taking the bearings of the place as well as he could, and at last coming to the conclusion that he should

not forget its position or the points that were around it; while at the same time he was obliged to own that they had evidently for some hours been wandering about with a general tendency to go to the north, when their goal should be in a diametrically opposite situation.

"Well, Mickey," said Wallace, after an impatient ejaculation, "I don't know that we ought to have left them alone."

"Sure, sur, an' we couldn't carry 'em with us," said Mickey. "We must find the hiding devil of a place, and then it will be time enough to go back and fetch them. But d'y'e think, sir, there is such a place at all?"

"What, as Si Slocum's ranch?" said Wallace, laughing. "Oh, no fear of that."

He kept turning and looking back, till they descended into a deep gorge; and then for the next two hours they were wandering hither and thither, till just as they were about to give up the quest as hopeless, they came to the edge of the valley, and Wallace Foster's sharp eyes detected signs of civilization.

"At last," he cried; and descending the slope, they came upon the beaten track, following it till they passed the spot where Jerry was calmly sleeping the hours away, and soon after their shouts were responded to, and, as we have seen, they came upon the ranch, and Ruth set off with him to act as guide.

"Yes," she said, "anybody strange to the place might wander about for weeks, and never find it; but to us every spot of ground, every corner of rock, is familiar. I guess I could go all over the place blind-fold, without falling over the precipices. But where did you say you left Miss Kate?"

"It was half-way up a very steep slope, with great, brown rocks."

"Oh, yes, I know," said Ruth, hastily. "Great, brown rocks sticking out of the soil, and beyond them a clump of great pines—forty-nine of them."

"What, you know the place?"

"Well," laughed Ruth, on seeing the astonished look of her companion, "I've been there a score of times. There's a mountain point beyond, with one straight edge, and the other a little scooped out. On the left here are three rounded knolls, and on the right a bit o' mountain that looks as if it had been cut off flat with a knife. That's it. Aint I right?"

"Yes," said Wallace, smiling, "that's the spot."

"Yes," said Ruth; "and yew've left them sitting under the pines waiting for you."

"Why, you're as good as a witch, Ruth Slocum," said Wallace, staring at her.

"Better, ever so much," said Ruth, laughing; "ask Si if I'm not. Well, I s'pose you came a terrible way round, didn't yew?"

"We've been hours coming from the place," said Wallace.

"And I could get there in little more than half an hour," said Ruth, laughing, as she paused opposite to a gap that seemed filled with pines. "Now, look here. I needn't come farther, because I've got to get ready for you. You see that gap full of pines?"

"Yes," said Wallace.

"Well, you go down— Where's your man, Mickey? Oh, here he comes! Been lagging behind to talk to Patsey, I know."

"He's an Irishman," said Wallace, laughing.

"Well," said Ruth, "you go down the slope here, cross the ravine, and then go up that gap through the firs. It will lead you to a flat-topped hill. Cross that, and then go round a pile of boulders on your left, look across the bit of a valley, and you'll see the clump of pines. Shall you recollect?"

"Oh, yes," said Wallace; "and in about an hour and a half we shall be with you."

They parted, Mickey hurrying up to his leader's side in time to hear those last words.

"Sure, sor, aint that a bit rash, to talk of being back there in an hour and a half, when we may lose our way?"

"We can't very well lose it now," said Wallace, confidently.

And crossing the little valley, after almost sliding down the slope—so steep was it—they entered the pass, and began to ascend the steep gorge that led upwards, cutting, as it were, through the opposite side of the ravine.

The pines grew so thickly here that they confused the travellers, who kept slipping on the pine needles which were thickly strewn beneath their feet; and so they journeyed on, through what seemed to be an impenetrable wall of tree trunks, so closely were they growing together.

Several times over they diverged, to avoid some dense place, and found themselves travelling back; but recovering the right direction, they soon after contrived to get to the top of the dark gap, and threw themselves down, panting and breathless, for they were faint with exertion and want of food.

"There's the flat-topped hill, sor, sure enough," said Mickey, as he rose once more.

"Come on, then," said Wallace, throwing his gun over his shoulder, "and let's get this weary task over. This comes of taking such a journey without a guide."

"Sure, an' it isn't many of the gentlemen up at the gulch that I'd have liked to have for a guide," said Mickey. "They're a plisant-looking lot, annyhow; an' I'm glad ye've got Miss Kate, the darling, away from them."

They found it all as Ruth had told them. The flat-topped hill crossed, they encountered the pile of boulders; going round them, there was the little valley in front, and across that they could see the great clump of pines, with the mountain marks on either side, as described.

"Ahoy!" cried Wallace, giving a loud hail; but there was no response, neither could he distinguish Kate among the trees.

"Sure, sor, an' they couldn't hear ye, if ye called tin times as loud; yer voice is lost in this big place, except whin it meets with the echo and has a run round."

"I don't see then," said Wallace.

"Sure, and the darlint's so hot and tired she's gone and lain down in the shade, out of the broiling sun; and the masther's snoring by her side. Did ye ever hear the masther snore, sor?"

"No," said Wallace, smiling, as they trudged on

—he accepting Mickey's explanation of their friends being invisible.

"Sure, an' he's got one of the most powerful snores ye ever heard in the course of yer loife, sor. I don't mane no disrespect; but if ye build a log-house out here, wid the bits of shingle wooden slates for roof, nail 'em down tight, or he'll lift 'em."

"This way, Mickey; and you must not talk to me like that of your master," said Wallace, smiling.

And they walked swiftly down the side of the flat-topped hill, reached the bottom, crossed the dip, where a pleasant little stream of water enabled them to slake their thirst, and then they began to skirt the little rivulet for a few yards, to where the slope was less steep for them to climb.

"Howly Moses, look there!" cried Mickey, pointing.

And, looking in the indicated direction, Wallace saw the mule, with its bridle between its legs, standing disconsolately by the streamlet.

"We must try and catch the devil," said Mickey; "he's bruk away. Come quietly, sir, one on ayther side, or he'll bolt again."

But, to their surprise, the mule, in place of running away, uttered a plaintive kind of squeal, and came towards them.

"Look, Mickey!" cried Wallace, hoarsely—"blood! The mule has been shot at. Quick, come on! Fool that I was to leave them!"

He turned to the steep mountain side, and began rapidly to ascend, his fatigue forgotten in the danger he believed to have overtaken Kate and her father.

He accused himself of cruelty, madness, and folly in turn, as he panted on, Mickey having hard work to keep up with him; while the mule, whose neck and shoulder had been scored by a bullet, followed close behind them, like a dog.

"Have yer pace ready, sor," said Mickey; "and if ye'll stay a moment, I'll just put another bullet in mine."

"No, no—come on!" cried Wallace, hoarsely, his face streaming with perspiration, and the veins in his forehead standing out ready to burst. "They must be in danger. Oh, Mickey, why did we leave them?"

"Sure, sor, it was to find the way to the ranch. Think of that now," he added to himself, "think of him forgetting why we wint."

It was an arduous climb; but they reached the clump at last, to find Mr. Townsend lying insensible amongst the pine needles, and the blood oozing from a wound in his forehead.

There were the marks of struggling, and Mr. Townsend's revolver, which he held tightly in his hand, was discharged; but there was no sign of Kate.

"Carried off by Indians!" cried Wallace, with an agonized groan.

"No, sir," said Mickey, who was binding up his master's head with all a woman's tenderness; "if it was Injun, they'd have taken the masther's hair as well. There aint much, but they'd have had it, the devils! It's some of them rowdies."

Wallace Foster's blood turned cold, as the truth flashed upon him. They must have been followed,

tracked in their wanderings, and the enemy had only been waiting their opportunity; and that he had given them by going away, leaving the poor girl, for whom he would have given his life, to fall into the hands of the man who had insulted her with his love.

Wallace Foster was quite right; for, with a hand-kerchief tightly bound across her mouth, Kate Townsend was lying helpless amongst the pine needles half a mile away, while close by her, with a smile of gratified revenge upon his lips, and the shadows of the funereal pines falling athwart his dusky face, sat Vasquez, surrounded by Jake Bledd-soe, Coyote Tobe, and a dozen companions.

A False Alarm.

ONE has often felt disposed to laugh at the specimens of Spanish brigands produced upon an English stage in old-fashioned pieces, little thinking how thoroughly true they are to nature; for the Spaniard is an individual who goes in strongly for show.

He believes in silver buttons to his vest, and a row to button nothing down the outer seam of his trousers; cock-tail plumes in his hat, sashes, velvet, silk, and the gayest of colours.

During a trip through Spain I had a good many opportunities of studying the peculiarities of these people; and after all said and done, their aspect is quite in keeping with the brilliant climate, and the gorgeous tints one sees around.

It was in the neighbourhood of Valencia—a name made familiar to English people by the British grocer and his raisins—that we were wandering amongst the mountains, sketching and botanizing, idling, and thoroughly enjoying ourselves, when one of our party exclaimed—

"I say, boys, suppose we were to meet with brigands?"

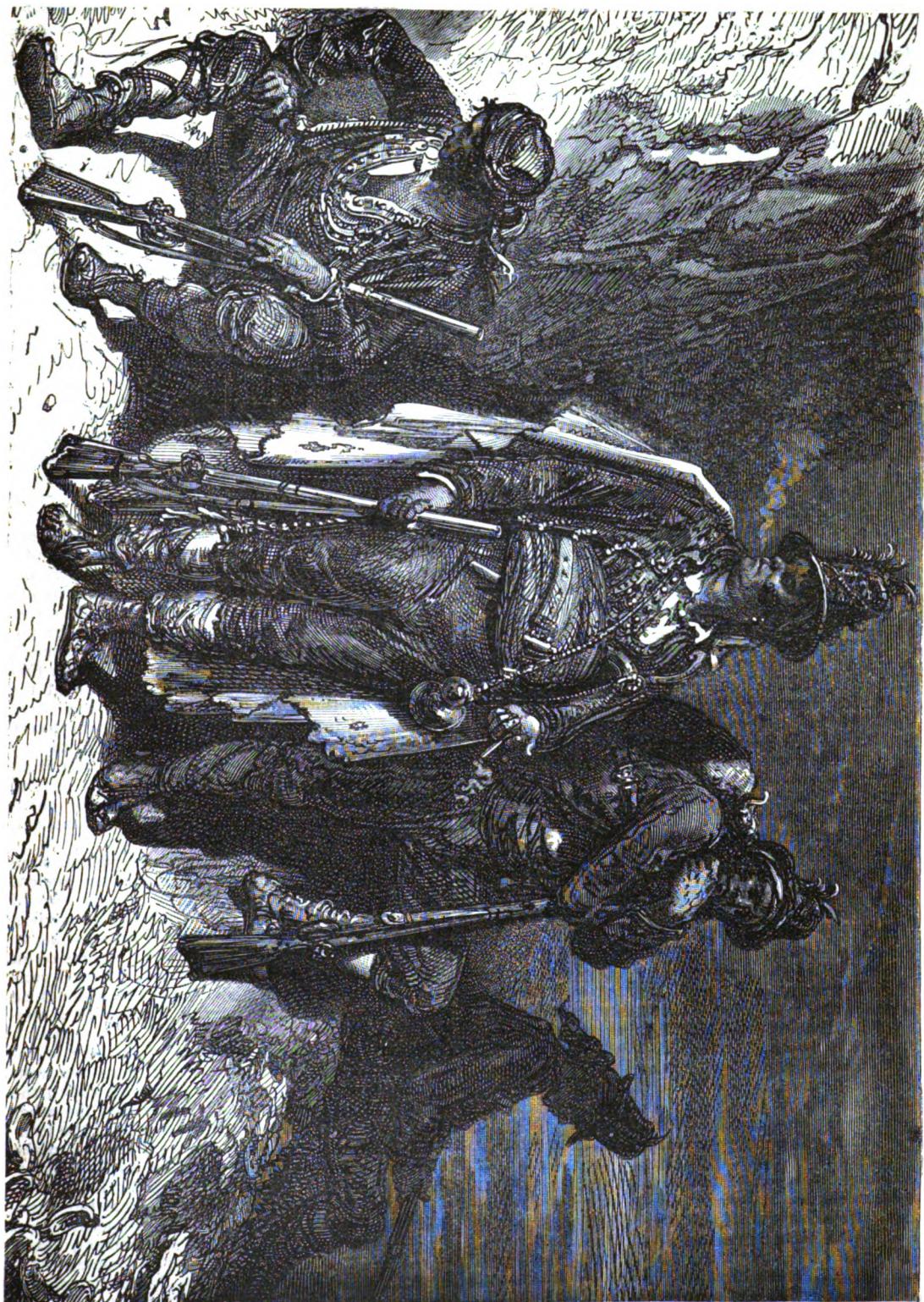
We all laughed and went on, when suddenly, as we turned slowly out of a narrow gorge on to a kind of platform on the mountain side, we came upon a group of four magnificent-looking fellows, evidently on the look-out for prey.

One fellow was smoking the inevitable cigarito, another leaned on his carbine, and two companions, piece in hand, were seated gazing in different directions into the valley far beneath.

We were completely staggered, for they were all armed with their short guns; pistols protruded from their brilliant crimson sashes, where they hid in company with long knives. Their velvet suits were rich with embroidery; their velvet breeches were of the gayest cut, and showy ribbons bandaged their brown legs.

As for their feet, they were not so well provided for as their heads; for while the latter were wrapped in a gorgeous handkerchief, over which was jauntily stuck a plumed hat, their feet only bore the simple old sandal, displaying the working of their brown toes.

What a study for an artist, I thought to myself, as one fellow, who had a great light-coloured cloak dependent from his shoulders, quietly turned towards us, and lazily puffed a thin cloud of smoke



SPANISH BRIGANTS.—(Page 172.)

from his lips, while the others hardly acknowledged our presence.

"We are in for it now," said my friend who had previously spoken.

"Indeed we are," I said. "This means ransom, and six months' garlic in the mountains."

"Why don't they attack us?" said my friend.

"Because they know we are safe," I replied. "If we were to try to escape, a dozen fellows would spring up behind us directly."

"I say, old fellow," said my friend, "this is no joke, though. I wish I was at home!"

"Let's put a bold face on it," I said, "and they may be content with robbing us of our watches, and letting us go."

"They are welcome to mine, and to make it go too, if they can," said my friend; "it's a brute."

"Keep quiet," I said, "and come along."

We showed as bold a face as we could, and walked steadily up to the picquet, who turned at last, and saluted us, when, not to be less civil, I offered them cigars.

"What impudence!" said my friend. "How generous! Just because you know they are going to take them."

The leader of the party accepted the cigars with pleasure, and took the stopper out of the gourd of brandy slung from his shoulder, and we partook, to find it particularly good.

By degrees we found out that their looks belied them, for they were no brigands at all, only what were called *mozos de la escuadra*—really hunters of brigands, robbers, and assassins, who made the mountains their refuge.

We found them very pleasant, intelligent fellows; and as we sat down, chatted, and smoked with them, while Doré sketched, we learned that it was rare for them to have an encounter with the *mala gente* of the neighbourhood.

"But you see, señor," said the leader, "our being about here keeps them away. At one time this mountain was a regular wasps' nest; now travellers like yourself can come and go in peace, instead of being stopped, robbed, and perhaps held to ransom."

We kept them in conversation until the sketch was done, and then, with as much show of politeness as we should have encountered in a drawing-room, our friends put us on the nearest track for the next town; and we parted, for them to resume their quiet watch, ready perhaps to favour some other innocent French or English party with a false alarm.

Russian and Turk.

PART II.—RUSSIAN.

THE Russian navy cannot compare favourably with the Turkish, for though their official list contains the names of a large number of ironclads, by far the greater portion of them are small turret vessels and monitors, designed for coast defence, and hardly fit for a voyage to the Mediterranean. They have five large frigates, it is true, but there is not one of them to be compared to the *Messoudieh*, and in all probability any one of the Turkish cor-

vettes of the *Fethi Rulend* class would be a match for a Russian ironclad frigate. One of these was, however, sunk the other day by a shell.

According to the list in question there are five frigates, one of which is building—one breastwork monitor building, three sea-going batteries, seven turret vessels, ten monitors, and two Popoffkas (circular ironclads). At the present moment the Russians have but one ironclad in the Mediterranean, two wooden frigates, and two gunboats.

This force would doubtless receive considerable additions, not with a view of giving battle to the Turkish fleet, but in order to draw off some of the ironclads from the Black Sea, and thus afford a better chance for the transports to move about. The Turks, in fact, will have to send some vessels to the Mediterranean, in order to protect their own transports and merchant steamers, amongst which may be classed the Egyptian mail vessels, as they will of course acquire an enemy's character.

It has been proposed to divide the fleet into two portions—the one to consist of all the large broadside ironclads, together with a couple of wooden frigates, and a corvette or so; and the other of all the armoured corvettes and smaller ironclads; the first to cruise in the Levant, with the Dardanelles as head-quarters, and the other to operate under the command of Hobart Pasha in the Black Sea.

It is not likely that the Russian fleet will attempt to meet the Turkish; though, if they could do so, and accomplish a victory, there would then be nothing much to prevent their forcing the Dardanelles, and appearing at Constantinople. It is true that there are some very respectable forts about the narrows of the Dardanelles, built upon modern principles, and mounting Krupp guns of heavy calibre; but the American war showed plainly enough that batteries alone would never stop ironclads. During that memorable struggle, the Federal vessels ran past batteries, designed to protect channels, with great success on several occasions, and even set the torpedoes at defiance.

The forts at the entrance to the Dardanelles are not of much account, being of somewhat ancient type; and though constructed of masonry, would soon be knocked to pieces by the fire of modern artillery. These batteries contain no very heavy guns, most of the pieces being smooth-bores of an old pattern; and though of late a few Krupp guns have been added, there is nothing which would do much damage to an ironclad passing at a distance.

From the entrance to the narrows there is nothing in the way of defences; but here two well-planned and constructed forts, the one called the Namazieh battery, at Killie Bahar, and the other the Medjidieh, a little to the northward of the town of Chanak, can deliver a cross-fire that would make it very warm, for a few minutes, for any vessels attempting to pass against the will of the Turks.

In Fort Medjidieh there are two 12½-ton Armstrong guns, besides some ten 15-centimetre Krupp guns. The Namazieh battery's armament, too, is very heavy, consisting as it does of some eight 22-centimetre Krupps. These are the strongest forts about the Dardanelles, and the only ones likely to

inflict much damage upon a hostile fleet, although there are three others which would still have to be passed. One of them, like the Namazieh, is of modern construction, and mounts a few Krupps of small calibre; but the others are like those at the entrance, and not much to be feared.

The forts of the Bosphorus are in much the same condition as those of the Dardanelles.

From the Black Sea to the two Kavaks, although there is a battery on almost every point on either side, no great damage could be inflicted upon ironclads forcing a passage, as their armament is not of much value. At the two Kavaks, however, where the channel of the Bosphorus begins to narrow, is a very formidable array of batteries well arranged for cross-fire. Two of them are of quite recent construction, and mount fourteen very heavy Krupp guns each, quite capable of piercing the armour-plating of most ironclads.

As far as torpedoes are concerned, the Turks do not appear to have done much, although the Imperial arsenal at Tophaneh has turned out within the last four months a number of large cases intended for submarine mines. It is said that a number have been placed both in the Bosphorus and at the Dardanelles, and a notice was issued some time ago respecting torpedoes at Batoom. With regard to the last-mentioned torpedoes, there is no doubt that some have been placed. The torpedoes used by Turkey consist of large iron cases cylindrical in shape, filled with some 1,000 lbs. of large grain powder, and so arranged as to float within thirty-five feet of the surface of the water. They are intended to be fired by electricity from the shore.

With regard to the defences of the towns along the southern shore of the Black Sea, the Turks are behindhand, as it is only at Batoom where the batteries are in anything like an efficient condition. At Trebisond there is nothing, and this town—the most important, as far as commerce is concerned, along the whole southern shore—the port of Erzerom, and the landing place of goods for the Persian market, are completely at the mercy of any bold naval commander who with a ship or two, even armed merchant steamers, can manage to slip past the Turkish fleet.

At Sinope, batteries for the defence of the harbour have been in course of construction for years past. They were so far from complete, however, in February last, that not a single gun could be mounted, and it is not likely that they will be finished for months yet.

The positions of the batteries have been well chosen with regard to cross-fire, and every part of the harbour is well commanded. Batoom is the point to which the Turks have given their greatest attention; for they know how ardently the Russians covet its possession. Lying close to the Russian frontier, it presents such a tempting prize, that to acquire it alone the Russians might almost risk a war. It is undoubtedly the natural port of the Caucasus; for there is no other harbour where vessels can lie in all weather for miles round. Under ordinary circumstances, the place presents much more the appearance of a Russian seaport than a Turkish harbour; for, as a rule, there are

seven or eight Russian steamers always lying in the port. All goods for the Caucasus have to be transhipped at Batoom into small steamers, to be taken inside the bar of the river at Poti, and it is naturally very galling to the Russians that the place should be in the hands of the Turks.

Not many years ago the Russians offered a very large sum for the cession of Batoom, but the Turks would not entertain the proposal to sell it; so the idea was taken up of creating a port at Poti. Vast sums of money have already been spent, and still the moles of Poti are not complete, as each succeeding winter destroys a large portion of the summer's work.

The defences of Batoom consist of a battery on the point, mounting twenty-five guns of various calibre, ranging from 12 to 22-centimetre Krupps, and two other smaller earthworks arranged to fire across the bay. The one to the northward mounts four guns, 15 and 22-centimetre Krupps, whilst the one at the head of the bay is armed with seven, three of which, however, are smooth-bores of heavy calibre.

Although the defences of Batoom seaward are formidable enough, no provision has been made for its protection against an attack in the rear. The Russians would have, however, a tremendous task to come down upon Batoom from behind, for there are high mountain ranges and thick forests to be traversed, and numerous streams to be passed, necessitating months of pioneer work before the army could advance.

There is another approach to Batoom, however, from the northward; and if the Russians had the command of the Black Sea, it would not be very difficult to capture the place by advancing with a sufficient force from Poti. The extensive plain of Poti is terminated by a spur from the mountain chain at a point about half-way between that town and Batoom. Here at this place, which is called Tsikinir, the Turks have thrown up a number of redoubts, and armed them with 24-pounder howitzers and mountain guns of small calibre. Their position is, in fact, exceedingly strong, and the redoubts could not be carried but at a great sacrifice of men; for not only would the invading army have to face their fire, but in advancing they would also be exposed to the fire of the Turkish squadron stationed at Batoom for its protection.

The Turkish troops at Batoom at the present moment amount to something like 12,000 men; but preparations have been made for enrolling the Circassians as light cavalry, so that in case of need a very large auxiliary force can be added.

It is not at all probable that the Russians will attempt the capture of Batoom until they have got hold of Kars and Ardahan, and any forces which may have been retained about Tiflis or Poti are, therefore, merely for defence. It is quite likely that the Turks, however, will, in the event of war, advance upon Poti, resting their left wing upon the fleet. There are no difficulties in the way, as the intervening streams are all fordable, and the distance not great. By capturing Poti, the Turks could inflict a heavy blow, as the railway to Tiflis would be in their hands, and they could destroy it as well as the harbour works.

For the defence of Poti, three earthwork batteries have been thrown up—one near the southern mole mounting four large Krupp guns, another a little south of it mounting two Krupps and twenty mortars, and a third four Krupps and thirty mortars. There is also a long entrenchment for riflemen, and a few torpedoes have been laid down as a "scare" for the Turkish ships.

The Russian troops for the invasion of Asiatic Turkey were concentrated at Alexandropol, a large town on the frontier, but a few hours' march from Kars. They were said to have something like 150,000 men, with all the transport arrangements ready for making an advance.

Kars is now very strongly fortified, new batteries having been constructed.

From Poti round to the Crimea there are a few small fortified posts, as at Anapa, Soukhoum Kaleh, and Redout Kaled; but they would offer very slight opposition to the Turkish fleet, as the guns are of no great calibre, and the Russians are trusting not so much to driving off the ironclads with a heavy fire, as to giving a warm reception to any landing parties by having detachments of Cossacks stationed along the coasts, assisted by batteries of light field pieces. It is said, also, that a very large number of torpedoes have been laid down along the coast, some of them far out at sea. How much has been done in this way can hardly be known, except to the Russian officers immediately concerned, as the successful use of submarine weapons depends more than anything else upon the secrecy with which the operations have been conducted. One thing, however, is known for certain, that the Russians throughout the winter have been most actively employed in manufacturing torpedoes in the arsenal at Nicholaieff, and that a great number have already been laid down in the harbour of Odessa, and the estuary of the Bug river.

Odessa is naturally the point to which the greatest attention has been given by the Russian authorities, for they have there so much to lose. It is their great commercial port in the Black Sea, and vast sums of money have been spent upon harbour works. Batteries have been constructed all round the bay; but according to the best judges their sites might have been better chosen, for it is quite possible, under existing circumstances, for a hostile ship to enter the bay and shell the town without being exposed herself to the fire of more than two batteries. Some of the earthworks might even be enfiladed by taking up positions close to the shore, and the depth of the water will allow of the approach of vessels up to a draught of 25 feet. About seventy guns, large and small, are in position, and probably some 400 torpedoes have been placed in the bay. The latest addition to the defence is a battery of light guns on the outer mole, intended for the protection of the inner lines of torpedoes. Some of the batteries are placed on the top of the cliff, and others about half-way down. It is said that some of the torpedoes have been laid down as far out at sea as five miles; but if so, they are far beyond the range of any of the batteries, and might either be picked up or destroyed by an adventurous enemy not afraid to risk his men.

Towards the end of the American war the Federals

became so used to the work that they regularly swept the rivers, and picked up hundreds of the Confederate torpedoes with, comparatively speaking, little loss in the way of men. It is true that the torpedoes of that date were different from those of the present day, in that their explosion depended upon mechanical action, and not upon electricity. The necessity for the employment of conducting cables renders it easier, however, to destroy electrical torpedoes, as by creeping with grapples from boats it is possible to pick up the wires, and when once the latter are cut the mine is useless. The boats naturally run the risk of being destroyed, as the torpedoes being laid down in groups and lines, *en échelon*, they must at times be hovering over some one or other of them; but then a torpedo can be used but once, and if fired for the destruction of a boat, a gap will be formed for the passage of the ships.

Nicholaieff, where the Russians have their arsenal, is most strongly defended by torpedoes. From the estuary to the town, the whole channel is mined; and there is little probability of the Turks attempting to force a passage. The Russian torpedoes are made of thin sheet copper, filled with dynamite, and, as we have said, are to be fired by electricity. They have been laid down off all the sea-coast towns, and the Straits of Kertch are full of them; for the Russians have a lively recollection of what was done by our gunboats round the shores of the Azof during the Crimean war.

So far, we have spoken of the Turks only as acting upon the offensive in the Black Sea; but it is quite possible that the Russians, who have many enterprising officers in their navy, will in their turn try to do what injury they can to the Turks by sea. They have in the fleet of the Black Sea Navigation Company some very fast steamers, which, slipping out of the blockaded ports at night, might run past the Turkish fleet, and capture or destroy the Turkish transports. They are all at the disposal of the Government, and most of the officers have served in the navy. Armed with one or two breechloading rifled guns, and fitted with the Harvey torpedo, they would make famous cruisers for any sort of work short of encountering regularly-armed men-of-war.

There is reason to believe that both at Odessa and in the mouth of the Bug river, as well as at Kertch, the Russians have small torpedo boats, intended to operate against blockading ships; and there is little doubt but that this war will exhibit a new phase of torpedo warfare.

Sea Serpent Stories.

SOME day or another, it is to be hoped that the sea serpent will be caught. So far he seems to have been of too slippery a nature to be held; but all the same he keeps cropping up in the newspapers, and then slipping through the would-be captors' fingers.

The other day the *Glasgow News* published a circumstantial narrative by a resident at Oban, from which it appeared that the sea serpent had at length been actually captured at that place.

Under date of the 27th ult. the correspondent writes :—

"A most extraordinary event has occurred here which I give in detail, having been eye-witness to the whole affair. I allude to the stranding and capture of the veritable sea serpent in front of the Caledonian Hotel, George-street, Oban. About four o'clock yesterday, an animal or fish, evidently of gigantic size, was seen sporting in the bay near Heather Island.

"Its appearance evidently perplexed a large number of spectators assembled on the pier, and several telescopes were directed towards it. A careful look satisfied us that it was of the serpent species, it carrying its head fully twenty-five feet above the water. A number of boats were soon launched and proceeded to the bay, the crews armed with such weapons as could be got handy.

"Under the directions of Malcolm Nicholson, our boatman, they headed the monster, and some of the boats were within thirty yards of it when it suddenly sprang half-length out of the water and made for the open. A random fire from several volunteers with rifles seemed to have no effect on it. Under Mr. Nicholson's orders, the boats now ranged across the entrance of the bay, and, by the screams and shouts, turned the monster's course, and it headed directly for the breast-wall of the Great Western Hotel.

"One boat, containing Mr. Donald Campbell, the Fiscal, had a most narrow escape, the animal actually rubbing against it. Mr. Campbell and his brother jumped overboard, and were picked up unhurt by Mr. John D. Hardie, saddler, in his small yacht, the Flying Scud.

"The animal seemed thoroughly frightened, and as the boats closed in the volunteers were unable to fire more, owing to the crowds assembled on the shore. At a little past six the monster took the ground on the beach in front of the Caledonian Hotel, in George-street, and his proportions were now fully visible.

"In his frantic exertions, with his tail sweeping the beach, no one dared approach. The stones were flying in all directions; one seriously injuring a man called Baldy Barrow, and another breaking the window of the Commercial Bank. A party of volunteers, under Lieut. David Menzies, now assembled, and fired volley after volley into the neck, according to the directions of Dr. Campbell, who did not wish, for scientific reasons, that the configuration of the head should be damaged.

"As there was a bright moon, this continued till nearly ten o'clock, when Mr. Stevens, of the Commercial Bank, waded in and fixed a strong rope to the animal's head, and by the exertions of some seventy folk, it was securely dragged above high-water mark.

"Its exact appearance as it lies on the beach is 101 feet, and the thickest part is twenty-five feet from the head, which is eleven feet in circumference. At this part is fixed a pair of fins, which are four feet long, by nearly seven feet across at the sides. Further back is a long dorsal fin, extending for at least twelve or thirteen feet, and five feet high in front, tapering to one foot. The tail is more of a flattened termination to the body proper than anything else. The eyes are very small in proportion and elongated, and gills of the length of two and a half feet behind. There are no external ears; and as Dr. Campbell

did not wish the animal handled till he communicated with some eminent scientific gentlemen, we could not ascertain if there were teeth or not.

"Great excitement is created, and the country people are flocking in to view it. Mr. Duncan Clerk, writer, formally took possession of the monster, in the rights of Mr. M'Fee, of Appin, and Mr. James Nicol, writer, in the name of the Crown."

As soon as the news reached London, the manager at the Aquarium at Westminster telegraphed to Oban, and offered to purchase the uncanny monster for purposes of exhibition; when lo! and behold, the sea serpent turned out to be "very like a whale," for it was a hoax.

Some little time back the following graphic account appeared in a Bombay paper, supposed to be written by a minister of some denomination:—

"I must tell you at once that I write on one of the most worn and commonplace of subjects—the voyage of a P. and O. steamer from Bombay to Aden. But I must ask you, before throwing this letter into the waste-paper basket, to read it through carefully. If it be not published, one of the most extraordinary facts in this world's history may be absolutely lost; and in the interest of truth, in the interest I may say truly of science, I ask you to make known what I now state. As a missionary, I have travelled over a great part of the world, but I can safely aver that what I saw on Saturday, the 18th day of March, was incomparably the most marvellous phenomenon that has ever met my eyes.

"We steamed out of Bombay harbour on the evening of Monday, the 13th of March, in the steamship *Hydaspes*, Captain Reynould. On Tuesday at twelve we had made 162 miles, on Wednesday at mid-day 429, on Thursday 707, and on Friday nearly 1,000; so that on Saturday morning we were about 1,550 miles from Bombay. Nothing of remark had occurred up to Saturday. There were a monkey and a Persian cat among the passengers, which had caused some little amusement; and thirty-two children who had caused extreme annoyance to the male passengers from the constant screams that they gave forth morning, noon, and night.

"The weather was cool, and nearly every one slept below; only one passenger, a Captain Davidson, and myself remaining on deck for the night. I was roused from sleep every morning at six by the men washing and scraping the decks, and on Saturday was roused as usual. I took my plate of broken biscuits to the stern, and sat there munching them, and looking at the sun rising. I was quite alone—Captain Davidson still sleeping in peace on the port side. There was a thick bank of clouds on the horizon, and as the sun rose from the sea, behind this dark bank, great masses of colour—red and blue and yellow—lit up the whole expanse of sky and sea. I was looking at a strange, ruddy blot of red on the water, right astern, when I saw, apparently near the horizon, but in the red blot, a dark moving shadow. It did not seem to move with the other shadows on the sea, and this fixed my attention to it. Soon I saw that it was steadily approaching the vessel. I could distinguish no form, only a dark shadow; but I made out certainly that it was advancing

towards us, and at a great rate. Fifteen minutes must have passed when I at last became able to distinguish the form of the advancing object. I spoke to the captain afterwards as to the distance the object could have been from us when I first distinguished it; and he told me I must have been deceived by the moving lights in supposing it near the horizon; and he guessed, from what I said, that it was then only three or four miles distant. Mistakes of a like nature, he said, are commonly made by the inexperienced.

"I cannot accurately describe my feelings on beholding that hideous sight. At first I turned to call out, to bring others to look on with me; but, before a cry could pass my lips, a second feeling of selfish pleasure, that I alone saw that fearful thing, seized me, and I turned my eyes again to the sea and kept them fixed there. Within 100 feet of the stern of our vessel, not now approaching us, but simply following steadily in our wake, was this hideous thing. A great mass of what looked like tangled seaweed, on which a futile attempt at combing had been made, rose out of the water. This mass must have been twenty or thirty feet in length, and ten feet in width; and as it came on it caused a wide ripple in the water, that showed there must be a still greater part below the surface. From the centre of this mass, raised just clear above it, and facing the vessel, was a great black head. The top was quite flat in shape, not unlike that of a monstrous toad. A thick fringe of coarse, reddish hair hung over the mouth, quite concealing it.

"But the eyes were the most awful part of this fearful thing. They were placed far apart, at either extremity of the flat head, distant from each other at least three feet. I must here state that all the passengers and all the crew, except the captain himself, saw the thing afterwards, but that there were scarcely two who could agree as to the colour and nature of these eyes. I can only, therefore, write as they appeared to me. The eyeballs were enormous; they must have been four or five inches in diameter. They scintillated constantly. Every one knows the extraordinary appearance of a surface covered with small, alternate squares of bright red and bright blue, the quivering, uncertain, unfixed look such a surface has, the difficulty, the impossibility experienced by the looker-on to fix the colour of any particular square. The eyeballs of this thing had such a quivering, uncertain look; but they were not red, nor blue, nor red and blue; they were of a bright—burningly bright—copper hue; they pained our eyes—and in this we were all agreed—as we looked at them. In the centre of each eyeball, a mere speck, but visible from its extreme brightness, was a point of light—of white light. It was impossible to tell whether these points were or were not material points of the eye, or merely caused by reflection; but they were clearly defined, and seemed to remain in the same place.

"The motion, however, of the thing was so steady that no deduction could fairly be drawn from their not changing their position. The appearance of this extraordinary creature was so new to me, so entirely outside all my previous experience, that I had no preconceived ideas with which to compare the thoughts it raised in my mind. So the impression

it caused was vague and indefinite, and I can only say that it raised in me extreme horror and dislike.

"I had been so absorbed in the pleasing pain of looking at the thing, that I had quite forgotten the other people on board, and was first roused by hearing Captain Davidson step up on the stern by me, give one look below at the water, and then hurriedly go back. In a few minutes every passenger was crowding on to the stern; even the ladies appearing, though in unfinished costume. Exclamations of the extremest astonishment broke from all, and then silence fell as the crowd stared at the hideous creature. The children, at the first sight, ran back below screaming, and some refused to come again on deck, though their nurses and ayahs—desirous of looking on themselves—used all possible means to make them. Some, however, returned—curiosity overcoming fear; but even these looked on in a perpetual tremor of terror, and held themselves ready at the first movement of the thing to rush away.

"I noticed at this time that the captain was not present, and turned to an old European sailor by me, and asked him to go and tell him.

"'Captain won't come, no fear of that, sir,' replied the man.

"I asked if he was navigating the ship?

"'No, he was not navigating the ship,' said the sailor, 'but he would not come for all that; however, he would go and tell him.'

"But though he went, the captain would not come.

"We all remained absorbed in the strange sight till the first breakfast-bell rang at half-past eight, when we had perforce to hurry away, and take our chance of bathing at that late hour. Up to this time the thing had kept steadily in our wake, its movement continuing absolutely smooth and constant, and the two specks of light in the glaring eyes never changing a hair's-breadth from their position. At breakfast I sat one removed from the captain. We began, of course, talking of the thing we had seen; but the captain, from some reason we could not then understand, seemed to dislike the subject, and soon we abandoned it, falling then into absolute silence, for we could talk of nothing else.

"When we went on deck again—we were only a few moments at breakfast—we found the thing still following steadily in our wake. The children had in great measure got over their fear, and had made a long line by joining hands; and the whole lot of them would now crouch down, and then suddenly rise up, open their mouths at the thing, and cry out at it. No notice apparently being taken of this, they grew bolder, and at last their cries increased till they shrieked shrilly.

"Suddenly the hideous creature seemed roused by these cries; it raised its head in the air, uttered a strange bellow, and came forward at a great pace towards the ship. None of us could at first move from fear; the thing seemed to have grown in size, its eyeballs were more burningly bright; the children fell on the deck crying, and some of the women fainted. But we who remained standing, suffering though we were under intense terror, still could not, when we at last were able to move, retreat, or even

take our eyes off the thing. It came swiftly up to the ship, always uttering the same peculiar cry or bellow. When but a few feet from the stern, it suddenly turned and came up close on the port side. Here the side awnings had been put up to keep off the sun; but three of us rushed up to the awning, and quickly got it down, that we might the better watch the thing. For myself I must say that, while doing this, I was still suffering from extreme fear; but my curiosity was so intense, so irresistible, that I could only act as I did.

"No sooner was the thing level with us than it raised itself with a sudden movement high out of the water, till its head was thirty or forty feet above us. It still uttered the same peculiar cry or bellow. Under our intense curiosity, we stood out on the bulwarks to follow its movements. It opened a great mouth, cried more loudly than before, and made three blows at the mainmast. The last of these touched it, and caused the ship to sway violently, so that we were nearly cast off into the water. When we again looked for the thing, it had gone. There was no ripple, no disturbance of any kind in the water to show where it had been. It was gone absolutely. We looked constantly for it during the rest of that day, but not the slightest trace did we again discover.

"And now let me state shortly why I, not over-facile in writing, or fitted for the subject by knowledge, write this. At tiffin, of that same day, just as we were rising to return on deck, the captain rose and asked us to remain for a few minutes. Then he shortly referred to the strange sight we had seen that day, laying stress on the fact, however, that he himself had not seen it, and he went on: 'Now, none of you can doubt what you saw; but I advise you not to talk about it. That was the sea serpent you saw. But I wouldn't talk about it if I saw it. It only leads to making people laugh, and the papers take it up and cut jokes on it, and it won't do you any good, and it would not do me any good. But then remember I did not see it, so I've nothing to do with this one. But, if you take my advice, you won't talk about it. *Punch* took up one sea serpent, and that captain never got over it—never. Remember, though, I didn't see this one.'

"You will see now, Mr. Editor, that if you don't publish this, a most extraordinary fact may be lost to the world. This account I may state has been read over by some of the passengers, and their disagreement from what I have written is only what would necessarily, under the circumstances mentioned, be expected. To show that I have no fear of ridicule, I give my name.

"MATTHEW STRONG.

"I may state that when the thing raised itself up and struck the mast it was apparent that the seaweed-like mass was long, coarse hair, covering a dark thick neck. But the thing could not possibly have been a serpent; for, to raise so prodigious a length of neck above the surface, a huge body below the surface was of course required."

If Matthew Strong did not tell the truth, he came it very strong indeed. But quite as wonderful a

story was told in the *Times* of July, 1870, as having been taken from the Indian papers:—

"We had left Colombo in the steamer *Strathowen*, had rounded Galle, and were well in the bay, with our course laid for Madras, steaming over a calm and tranquil sea. About an hour before sunset on the 10th of May, we saw on our starboard beam, and about two miles off, a small schooner lying becalmed. There was nothing in her appearance or position to excite remark, but as we came up with her I lazily examined her with my binocular, and then noticed between us, but nearer her, a long, low swelling lying on the sea, which from its colour and shape I took to be a bank of seaweed. As I watched, the mass, hitherto at rest on the quiet sea, was set in motion. It struck the schooner, which visibly reeled, and then righted. Immediately afterwards the masts swayed sideways, and with my glass I could clearly discern the enormous mass and the hull of the schooner coalescing—I can't think of no other term.

"Judging from their exclamations, the other gazers must have witnessed the same appearance. Almost immediately after the collision and coalescence, the schooner's masts swayed towards us, lower and lower; the vessel was on her beam-ends, lay there a few seconds, and disappeared, the masts righting as she sank, and the main exhibiting a reversed ensign struggling towards its peak. A cry of horror rose from the lookers-on; and, as if by instinct, our ship's head was at once turned towards the scene, which was now marked by the forms of those battling for life—the sole survivors of the pretty little schooner, which only twenty minutes before floated bravely on the smooth sea.

"As soon as the poor fellows were able to tell their story, they astounded us with the assertion that their vessel had been submerged by a gigantic cuttlefish or calamary, the animal which, in a smaller form, attracts so much attention in the Brighton Aquarium as the octopus. Each narrator had his version of the story, but in the main all the narratives tallied so remarkably as to leave no doubt of the fact. As soon as he was at leisure, I prevailed on the skipper to give me his written account of the disaster, and I have now much pleasure in sending you a copy of his narrative:—

"I was lately the skipper of the *Pearl* schooner, 150 tons, as tight a little craft as ever sailed the seas, with a crew of six men. We were bound from the Mauritius for Rangoon in ballast to return with paddy, and had put in at Galle for water. Three days out we fell becalmed in the bay. On the 10th of May, about 5 p.m.—eight bells I know had gone—we sighted a two-masted screw on our port quarter, about five or six miles off; very soon after, as we lay motionless, a great mass rose slowly out of the sea about half a mile off on our larboard side, and remained spread out, as it were, and stationary; it looked like the back of a huge whale, but it sloped less, and was of a brownish colour; even at that distance it seemed much longer than our craft, and it seemed to be basking in the sun.

"'What's that?' I sung out to the mate.

"'Blest if I know. Barring its size, colour, and shape, it might be a whale,' replied Tom Scott.

"And it aint the sea serpent," said one of the crew, "for he's too round for that ere crittur."

"I went into the cabin for my rifle, and as I was preparing to fire, Bill Darling, a Newfoundland, came on deck, and looking at the monster, exclaimed, putting up his hand—

"Have a care, master. That 'ere is a squid, and will capsize us if you hurt him."

"Smiling at the idea, I let fly and hit him; and with that he shook. There was a great ripple all round him, and he began to move.

"Out with all your axes and knives," shouted Bill, "and cut at any part of him that comes aboard! Look alive, and Lord help us!"

"Not aware of the danger, and never having seen or heard of such a monster, I gave no orders, and it was no use touching the helm or ropes to get out of the way. By this time three of the crew, Bill included, had found axes, and one a rusty cutlass; and all were looking over the ship's side at the advancing monster. We could now see a huge oblong mass moving by jerks just under the surface of the water, and an enormous train following. The oblong body was at least half the size of our vessel in length, and just as thick. The wake or train might have been 100 feet long.

"In the time that I have taken to write this the brute struck us, and the ship quivered under the thud; in another moment monstrous arms like trees seized the vessel, and she heeled over; in another second the monster was aboard, squeezed in between the two masts, Bill screaming 'Slash for your lives!' But all our slashing was of no avail, for the brute, holding on by his arms, slipped his vast body overboard, and pulled the vessel down with him on her beam-ends; we were thrown into the water at once, and just as I went over I caught sight of one of the crew—either Bill or Tom Fielding—squashed up between the masts and one of those awful arms. For a few seconds our ship lay on her beam-ends, then filled and went down. Another of the crew must have been sucked down, for you only picked up five; the rest you know. I can't tell who ran up the ensign.—JAMES FLOYD, late master, schooner *Pearl*."

Krakens, devil-fish, and all the rest of the horrors of the sea, fall short of this great beast. Fortunately for the comfort of travellers, there is such a thing as disbelief, and though we must accord that there is plenty of room for such monsters in the depths of ocean, until we see one ashore at Brighton, or some other spot accessible to London, we shall not believe.

Mr. Henry Lee, the naturalist, however, has a theory, as we have before mentioned, that it is possible that the monsters whose remains are found in the shape of fossils may still have representatives in the depths of the ocean, and that they only appear on the surface when in ill-health. The plesiosaurus, with his serpent neck and whale-like body, would answer the description given by some mariners; but they must catch one, and bring it home, to give public satisfaction to those who have heard the cry of "wolf" too often to be easily taken in again.

The Egotist's Note-book.

MIND your mutton; and if you eat Southdown, see that you get it, for the last new piece of adulteration has been the painting of sheep's heads, so as to give them the sooty aspect of the well-known black-muzzled animal so popular upon our tables. What next?

An Irish friend, who never reads the papers, says he hears that the Turks are bombarding Kalafat from Widdin, and he can't understand it, for he thought they always bombarded a city from "widout."

Cabby, with one of his young hopefuls on the box
"The horse don't hurry himself, does he, father?"

"He never hurries himself when I'm hired by the hour."

"But how does he know?"

"Why, when I get a customer like that I always whip him on the right side, and he knows what that means."

Before marriage: Miss Angelina seated at table, her chin resting on her hands, and her elbows on the table.

Jones, looking at her admiringly: "What a charming girl! How simple and unaffected!"

Twelve months after: Mrs. Jones in precisely the same position.

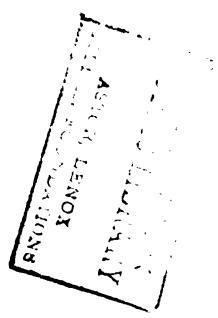
Jones, shrugging his shoulders: "What an attitude, Angelina! Where are your manners?"

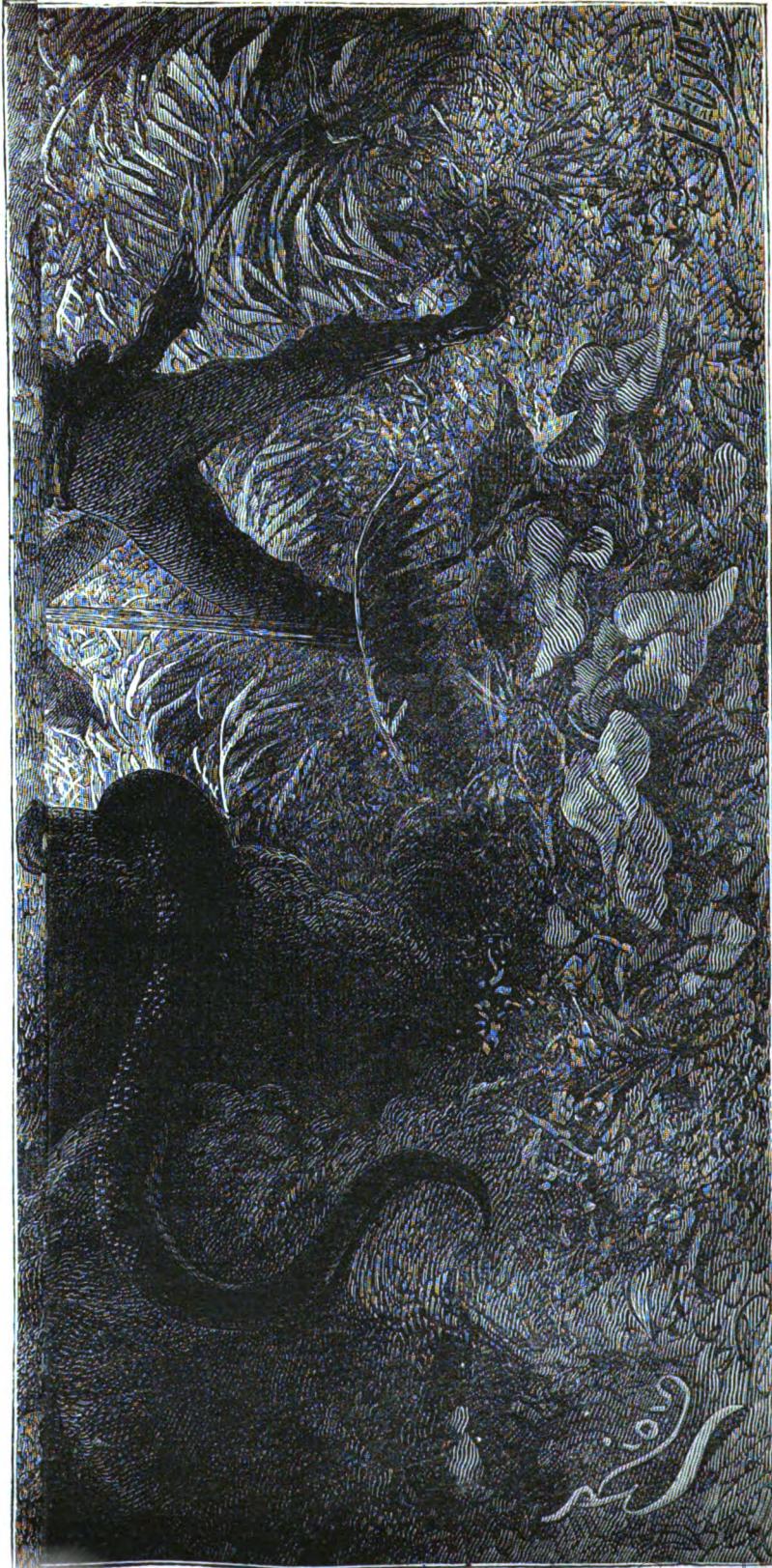
The *Daily News*, in its account of the scene on the Resolution night, said that Mr. Gladstone came into the House looking hot and excited, as if he had had a good deal of trouble in getting through the crowd. This was the case; and a friend who stood by tells me that it was well known outside that the Resolutions would be withdrawn, the knowledge having such an effect upon some ardent politicians that they not only hooted the great statesman, but shouted after him, "Turncoat, turncoat!"

"So you've cut Pinto?" said Sir George, meeting Lord D—, in Pall Mall. "He abuses you horribly."

Lord D—: "Just so. He wishes people to think that he is still one of my friends."

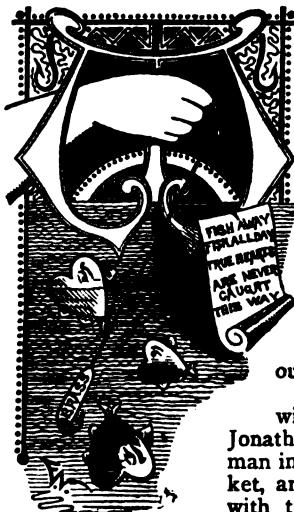
THE morality of the business world may be considered at a very low ebb, when almost directly a new article has been introduced, and is by universal consent considered a success, worthless imitations of it appear. These imitators trade upon the reputation gained by the original invention, and if not narrowly watched bring it into bad repute. Imitations are in existence of the "New Patent Stocking Suspender," the only safeguard being the name of Almond stamped on every clasp and on the band. Every lady desiring health and comfort should provide herself with a pair of these useful articles, which may be obtained of Mr. H. J. Almond, 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, E.C. Ladies' size, post free 3s. 2d. per pair. Size of waist required.





"INFLICTING FEARFUL WOUNDS."—(Page 222.)

Rivals in Love.



ELL, yes, there is something about widows that exercises a strange influence upon the male human being. Unmarried men may be in the presence of so many single ladies for a month, and be at peace; but put them in the presence of a widow, and they quarrel—outrageously.

Mrs. Punnett was a widow, the relict of Jonathan Punnett, a salesman in Covent Garden Market, and she had been left with two thousand pounds in the Funds. She was

pleasant-faced, peachy-skinned, plump, and about thirty; and her temper and ways gave her this aspect.

I used to meet Mrs. Punnett at the Rundles', and I liked meeting her. I also used to meet Mr. Henry Jackson and Mr. Thomas Johnson at the Rundles', and I did not like meeting them.

Not that I had any particular reason for objecting to these individuals; but I object to men who squint, and I don't like men who brush their hair straight up, in a combative manner.

Now, Jackson squinted with one eye, and Johnson would have his hair cut all over an inch and a half in length, and stick it straight up like a brush.

They smiled upon the widow horribly, and looked matrimony at her. At each other they looked daggers and spikes. Those two men hated one another in the most deadly manner; and I believe that either would have smiled if he had heard that his rival had been run over or crushed, drowned or blown up.

Love had a great deal to do with this, party bias a little; for Jackson kootooed to Kenealy, and Johnson idolized De Morgan. As for me, I sat patiently waiting for the time when, like the Kilkenny cats, they should devour one another—metaphorically, of course—and leave nothing behind but the tale of their loves.

The Rundles, at the time I speak of, were suffering from the spiritualism craze; and on their quiet evenings, once a week, when all friends were welcome, we used to be favoured with the society of a fat, white man, with long, straight, black hair, powdered till it shone and stuck, and was brushed close behind his ears.

He was, to use his own words, a "mejum," and Mrs. Rundle's great delight was what was termed a *stance*.

Mrs. Rundle took to spirits of this higher class, as some people do to the lower class spirits, and she lived in a kind of mental intoxication.

Every one to her taste, so long as she confines it to herself; but Mrs. Rundle was never happy without she intoxicated her friends, by dragging them into her own spirit circle, and if you did not choose to be *stance* you had better stay away.

Matters had been getting very unpleasant at the Rundles', for Mrs. Punnett came as regular as clock-work on Wednesdays, and Jackson and Johnson did likewise.

Of course, I went too, for I couldn't bear to see the poor little widow pestered by such a couple of upstarts; but I said nothing.

"Now," said Mrs. Rundle, one night, "take your places, ladies and gentlemen—round the big loo-table, please. Mr. Stearine says we shall have a capital *stance* to-night. He thinks the surroundings are favourable."

A good deal of laughing and joking went on; and, in spite of my efforts, Jackson ensconced himself in a chair on one side of the widow Punnett, and Johnson took the chair on the other side, nearly scorching the widow's ears with the angry glances that shot just by her back hair.

"All right," I said to myself.

And I took the opposite seat.

Then the medium, Mr. Stearine, took his place. I was required to lower the gas, hands were joined, and in the most utter darkness the *stance* commenced.

It was some little time before the medium made any demonstration; there were the usual crackings and raps, and then Mr. Stearine declared that the spirits were at hand, and began to ask questions.

"Who are you?" he demanded of one of the ethereal beings who made the table crack.

"P-u-n-e-tt," was rapped out.

And there was a gasp from the spot where the widow sat.

"What do you come for?" asked the medium.

"Vengeance," was the reply.

"Ask him," said the trembling widow, "if he is angry with me."

"No," was replied, decisively.

"What do you mean by vengeance, then?" said the medium.

"Snobs," was rapped out.

And Mrs. Punnett gasped.

"Who are snobs?" said the medium.

"Jackson—Johnson," rapped the spirit.

"Oh!" sighed Mrs. Punnett.

"What do you mean by vengeance?" said the medium.

"Wait—see," was answered.

"Can you give any further manifestation of your presence, Mr. Punnett?" said the medium.

"Oh!" gasped a voice on the other side of the table.

"Ah!" shrieked another.

"Some one kicked me on the shins," cried Jackson. "Oh! that's too bad!"

There was the sound of a heavy thud.

"Some one has struck me in the face," cried Johnson. "Oh! that's cowardly!"

Another tremendous buffet was heard.

"Bring lights," cried a voice; "the ladies are fainting."

Bang! whack! crack! thud! whish! crash!
Blow after blow was heavily struck, and then perfect silence followed, broken by a series of raps of a most vigorous nature.

"Why don't lights come?"

"Hark," said the medium, "the spirit wishes to communicate."

And, as the raps went vigorously on, he read off the message of this spiritual telegraphy—

"Let her marry a sensible man, and not snobs."

Then came silence, as the scratching of a match was heard upon a box; the tiny flame shone out, the gas was lit, and Mrs. Punnett was seen with her face buried in her handkerchief, and her forehead upon the table; while Jackson and Johnson were leaning back in their chairs, looking as pale as sheets.

At least, there I am wrong, for Johnson looked red—his nose was bleeding, and he had smudged his face.

As for Jackson, one of his eyes was closing fast, and promising hopefully to be very black the next day.

They stared very hard at me, and I looked as sympathizing as I could; for I was sorry for the poor gentlemen on the other side of the table, as their condition was pitiable.

It showed me the evil of summoning spirits from the vasty deep, and I said so; for this materialization was a proof of the strength of arm possessed by the friends of the medium at one guinea per séance.

Mr. and Mrs. Rundle were horrified, and busied themselves with attending upon the injured guests.

"I'm bruised from top to toe," groaned Jackson.

"So am I," said Johnson, savagely; "and I don't believe it was the spirits at all."

"No more don't I," said Jackson, fiercely.

And then the two men glared at one another, as if each was suspicious, and believed his rival had been throwing fists.

"Let me help you away, now, darling," said Mrs. Rundle to Mrs. Punnett.

And, without bestowing a look upon any one, the poor little woman allowed herself to be led into another room, from which Mrs. Rundle emerged soon after, to announce that her little visitor had gone.

"I'm dreadfully sorry," she said, "that the séance took such a peculiar form to-night; but then, we cannot control the spirit world."

We broke up soon afterwards; and I helped Mr. Stearine on with his coat, shaking hands with him very warmly afterwards, as we parted at the door; and I said—

"Thank you, Mr. Stearine, for a very pleasant evening."

"Thank you, sir," he exclaimed.

And we parted.

Under the circumstances, I felt bound to call upon Mrs. Punnett the next day, to speak soothingly; and she welcomed my presence, ending by declaring that she would not go to the Rundles' séance meetings any more.

And she did not, to the great disgust of Messrs.

Jackson and Johnson, who remain enemies to this day.

In fact, Jackson communicated to me in confidence that Johnson had got the whole matter up, and assaulted him in the dark, so as to put an end to his pretensions to the widow's hand.

Johnson made a similar communication, and declared to me that, if he could bring it home to Jackson, he would have the law of him.

"But can't you prove it?" I said.

"No, that's the worst of it," he replied. "But I shall some day. And—would you believe it?—Mrs. Punnett refused me when I offered my hand! But I shall bring it home to Jackson yet."

He's a very clever man, but I don't see how he can.

By the way, Jackson was refused by the widow, and he demanded to know who was his rival; but she would not tell him, though she owned that she was engaged. Bless her sweet little face! how prettily she can blush!

Jackson and Johnson both want to know who cut them out.

I think I could tell them. Ha! ha! ha!

But I'm so modest, I won't say a word.

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—ON THE TRAIL.

WALLACE FOSTER stood gazing straight before him into space, his face seeming ghastly pale, in spite of the brown tinge given to it by the sun; and Mickey, kneeling with his master's head upon his lap, looked at him in affright, so strange and weird was his aspect.

Mickey spoke to him twice, but he made no answer; and at last the Irishman laid poor Mr. Townsend's head gently down upon the ground, rose, and laid his hand on the young man's shoulder.

"Sure, sor, and don't look like that; ye frecken me."

Wallace gave a loud sigh, and turned a strange, hopeless look upon Mickey.

"That's better, sor. Have another, it'll aise the poor heart ov ye. Sure, ye'll be all the better."

"Oh, Mickey, Mickey!" Wallace groaned.

"That's it, sor; now get in a tare-an-ouns kind of a passhin', an' knock me down wid the butt ind ov yer gun; sure, ye'll feal like a new man intirely. Do, sor, do. If ye'd only blayguard me wid all yer might for about a quarter of an hour, sure, it's relaving yerself of half the weight on yer poor mind."

"Oh, Mickey, Mickey!" groaned Wallace, covering his face with his hands, "I've been mad—mad—mad."

"Sure, sor, an' ye will be iv ye don't make a thry to shake it off."

"It's my wretched lust for riches brought these two poor creatures out with me into this savage wilderness, and exposed them to these horrors. Oh, Kate, Kate, Kate!" he sobbed, "I've murdered you! for whom I'd have shed the last drop of my blood."

"Howld hard, sor, howld hard!" cried Mickey,

taking the young man by the shoulder, and shaking him—"I towld ye to blayguard me, and ye've taken the wrong turnin', and ye're blayguarding yerself. Aisy, now, aisy!"

"The villain—the fiend!" cried Wallace, flaming up, his face flashing, and his eyes darting rage. "Oh, if I could have him by the throat for one single moment!"

"Bedad, and that's betther, sir. That's the way. Iv ye only had him by the throat!"

"Curse him, I could strangle him like a poisonous reptile!"

"Hurroo!" cried Mickey. "That's the way, sor, poisonous reptile he is; and if the blessed Saint Patrick—a soft place in Heaven to him!—had seen Misther Vaskey, he'd have kicked him out of ould Oireland like a shnake or any other sarpint."

"Mickey, we must lose no time."

"Divil a bit, sor," cried Mickey. Then to himself—"Bedad, I've started up the devil in him, and he'll be all right now."

"You must get Mr. Townsend back to Si Slocum's ranch, and summon help. We'll place him on the mule."

"Yes, sor, we will; and I'll lade him gently."

"Tell Si Slocum to come, and bring what help he can to hunt out this devil, and blot him from the face of the earth."

"Arrah, sor, and I wouldn't. I'd shoot him dead, if I had the chance. Don't get to close quarters—they riptiles bite like poison."

"Here, quick. Lose no time."

"And what'll yer honour be afther doin'?"

"Doing? Seeking that poor girl, if I have to go over the wide world."

"And all alone, sor?"

"Yes, alone," cried Wallace.

"Sure, sor, and that's shooicidal, and doin' the darlin' no good. Come wid me to the ranch, and get Si Slocum and whoever he's got there, and we'll all go together."

"What! And leave that poor girl in the hands of Vasquez?"

"Sure, Masther Wallace, sor, don't ye know that little Miss Kate has got the shtronng sperret in her to kape a dozen such riptiles as Vaskey at a distance till we come back? Ah, and ye don't know her so well as I do."

"No words, Mickey," said Wallace, firmly. "I hope poor Mr. Townsend is not badly hurt. Here, quick."

He walked to where the mule was standing, looking dolefully on; and, patting its neck, he examined its wound, the poor beast, as if understanding what it meant, standing perfectly still, and merely uttering a plaintive kind of cry.

"It's not much more than skin deep," said Wallace, patting the poor beast again, when it rubbed its nose against his hand, following him to where Mr. Townsend lay.

"Sure, he's all right again, poor boy," muttered Mickey, "and he'll go to work like a man. It freckened me to see him strhuck all cowld and stony as he was."

Wallace knelt down, and examined the bandage Mickey had put to his master's wound; and then,

beckoning the Irishman to his side, they together managed to lift Mr. Townsend on to the back of the mule, securing him to the saddle girths; so that, with a little exercise of care, it was quite possible to lead the mule without the insensible man slipping off.

"Now, can you recollect the way, Mickey?" said Wallace, quietly.

"Yes, sor; but ye'll come wid me?"

"Take your master straight to the ranch, and beg Ruth Slocum, for my sake, to nurse him night and day."

"Sure, an' I will, sor. It's meself will be as careful as I can. But ye'll come wid me, sor, and we'll come back togedder."

"Then follow me with Si Slocum."

"But where will we folly ye, sor?"

"I shall hunt out the trail of these wretches here," said Wallace; "and as I find it and go along, I shall break off bits of twigs, or give the pine bark a blaze with my knife, so that you can easily follow me, and you will lose no time."

"Divil a bit, sor," cried Mickey; "but ye'll come wid me?"

"Now go at once," said Wallace, firmly.

Mickey looked at him, heaved a sigh, and then, taking the bridle, set off, zigzagging down the steep slope; while Wallace, forgetting fatigue and hunger, ran back amongst the pines, and began harking to and fro, like a dog, in search of the trail that he must sooner or later find.

It was a longer task than he expected, but by diligent search he found at last a few pine needles kicked over here, a pine cone dislodged there, and now and then the herbage pressed down by feet—indications so faint that over and over again he was on the point of giving up his quest, thinking that it was impossible that he could be right.

But on proving it, he found he was getting over the difficulty to his mind by walking a couple of dozen yards in another direction, and then returning to examine his own trail.

It was so slight on the dry pine-needly soil, that in places it was almost imperceptible; and therefore the marks he found on the trail he wished to follow, faint as they were, seemed quite consistent with the passage of a dozen men.

The desire was in him to run till he sank breathless upon the earth; but he knew that this was impossible, and that it was only by going very slowly and carefully that he could follow the trail; and therefore it was at the veriest snail's pace that he progressed, while his heart seemed to bound forward, and chide him for his wretched speed.

The party seemed to have gone along very leisurely, and the course was sinuous; but as Wallace, to keep his brain from the maddening thoughts that flooded it, forced himself to think of the trail he was following, he seemed to find a reason for the wanderings; and he could not help feeling that it was chosen with reason to avoid steep obstacles, and by one who well knew his way.

As he progressed, Wallace kept a watchful eye upon the trees and openings in front, his rifle ready; and it would have gone hard with any of Vasquez's party if the young man had had them within shot;

for, excited as he was, he was at the same time steady of nerve, so great a mastery had he obtained over self in his desire to pursue this trail to the end.

Onward, still slowly, scanning every blade of grass and herb, missing the trail sometimes, picking it up again farther on, and noticing always that it seemed to lead him more round to the south, instead of, as he expected, towards the north.

Ever and again, too, Wallace chipped off a scrap of bark from a fir tree, or broke a twig; while as he walked he kicked up the pine needles, and made his own track so plain that those who followed might have pursued it running—little thinking, poor fellow, that it would never be followed, and that the next one who pursued the weary way would be himself, instead of those whom he hoped to find come to his help.

Night was fast falling, when at last he came upon unmistakable proofs that the trail forked.

He examined both—now going to the right, now to the left; and returned at last to the beginning of the fork, to sit down, heartsick, faint, and utterly exhausted. What could he do—which trail could he follow? If he took one, he might certainly get revenge, but at the same time be going every moment farther and farther from her who was probably looking to him for help—to him who had so basely left her to encounter this horrible danger.

Wallace, at last, in this wretched state of divided purpose, felt a strange kind of recklessness come over him; and he stood gazing first down one route amongst the fir trees, and then along the other, which descended a steep slope, where the way was rocky.

At last, he determined to follow the latter—for no reason, save that it was the most difficult; and bending down he followed the trail for a few yards, to find it indistinct, then grow invisible; for darkness had fallen upon the earth, and, till morning sent its light once more across the hills, nothing could be done.

For a few minutes Wallace stood, in the fast-gathering obscurity, gazing down at the earth; then a feeling of giddiness came over him, he clutched wildly at the nearest tree, but his hands glided over the smooth bark, and he sank down heavily to the earth, to lie there, insensible for the time being to the woes that strained his mental cords almost to the point where they must snap.

CHAPTER XXXV.—MICKEY AT FAULT.

SURE, and he was the boy that was mint for a big ginius," said Mickey, as he went on beside his mule. "When he sez a thing he manes it, and the devil a bit is it of any use to thry and resist him. 'Now, get on at wanst,' he says, in his bowld, strhong way; and ye fale obliged to do his bidding, for all the world as if he was pushing of ye along. Arrah, howld up, me boy," he continued to the mule, who put his fore feet together and let himself slide down a very steep bit of grass. "Don't be after spillin' the poor masther, whatever ye do, for it's bad enough he is, anyhow. Sorrow come to the hand that hurt him, poor owld sowl! He's had troubles enough, anyhow; an' I'd be down upon the devil that even threw a dirthy word at him now."

It was very slow work, for the mule seemed to be aware of the insensible nature of its burden, and it went down the steep incline with the greatest of care, winding in and out amongst the protruding rocks till it was down in the bottom once more, when it paused to slake its thirst at the little stream, and Mickey dipped a tin cup in the sparkling water, and poured a few drops between his master's lips.

"Poor sowl!" said Mickey, "he's as onsensible as if he was fast aslape. An' bad luck to the murtherin' villins; it's longing I am to be standing forninst 'em wid a dacint shtick in my hand. I'm a bit out ov practice, but I think I cud give some ov 'em the headache for a week, if I didn't for a fortnit. Come along, Pater. I don't suppose that's yer name, for I belave ye was bought of a Mexican, and they'd call ye Josey, orFeeleepo, or some such haythenish name. Be aisy wid the poor masther. Let's see, we've got to go over the flat-topped hill."

Mickey stood thinking for a few moments; and then he took hold of the mule's ear, and held it a little more open, to speak into it.

"Look here, Pater," he said, "it'll only be jolting the poor masther by going right up that strait side of a house-like hill, crossing the top, and going down the other side, when we can go round. So, what do ye say? It looks aisy, don't it, eh?"

The mule twitched its ear, and uttered a noise that was a compound of squeal, bray, and neigh.

"To be sure," said Mickey, quietly, and addressing the flagstones around. "Sure, I don't wonder at Balaam's ass spaking after this, though, as I towld Father Larry, I had me doubts about it wanst. Only look at the sensible baste, and how beautifully he agreed to the common-sense view I took of the case. Sure, he's a lovely craythur intirely. Come along."

So, with a display of as much sense as was shown by the mule after his late experience of the house-like nature of the hills, they travelled on; for before long he and the mule were going, as they supposed, along a ravine which would lead them gently round the flat-topped hill, and bring them to the valley, without their having to descend the gap where the dense growth of pines ran high.

Mickey was wrong. His intentions were of the best, and he trudged steadily on; taking the greatest care of his master, so as to save him from every rude shock. But he was wrong; for before he knew it he was taking him right away in another direction, passing opening after opening, which seemed nothing as he went, but which would afterwards prove of the most confusing nature, and lead him farther and farther from his goal.

"Poor owld boy!" said Mickey—"a wound to one at his toime of life isn't nice. Arrah, now, I'm glad I come this way. Look at the big blocks lying about! Sure, and they seem just the same as those Masther Wallace said was silver. Faith, I'll bring the boy here, and show him what I've diskivered. It's a rich man I shall be some day. Aisy, Pater, aisy—think of the poor masther."

The mule trudged along steadily, this latter apostrophe being elicited when some rough stones had to be passed.

"Howld up, masther, dear," said Mickey; "it won't be long now avore we get to the ranch; but

it's the nature of these places to stretch out longer, like injy rubber, and ye never know where ye are. Get along, Pater, me boy."

They went on and on, hour after hour, till Mickey began to regret having left the track he was to follow; but as it seemed to grow more likely that he would find a way round to the left very shortly, he gave up the idea of retracing his steps, and went steadily on, with all the dogged obstinacy of the mule he drove. His master lay perfectly passive on the mule's back, with a handkerchief spread over his face to keep away the flies; and whenever Mickey raised it tenderly, to see how he progressed, it was to find him plunged in the same stupor as when he was found.

"Poor old soul!" said Mickey—"it's best as it is; but I shall be mighty glad when I can get to the ranch, for it seems playing bo-peep wid me, and I never get a bit nearer. Shall I turn back, becase Masther Wallace must be looking out for help, and it'll be to-night before I get to me journey's end?"

"No, I'll go on," said Mickey. "Come along, Pater."

And on they went again, with the sun getting lower and lower.

How far Mickey would have journeyed it is impossible to say; but as they were turning along a fresh ravine, his mule suddenly pricked forward its ears.

"Eh?" said Mickey, who was on the alert. "Somebody forinst us, Pater? Good boy, to tell me. Stop there, thin, while I go and see."

He left the mule standing, flicking the flies away with its ears and tail, while Mickey crept forward, stealing from stone to stone, till, peering over into a declivity, he became aware of the presence of half a dozen well-armed desperadoes, sitting and lying upon the soft grass, some smoking, while two of them seemed to be rebandaging their hurts.

"Howly Mother!" said Mickey to himself, "these are some of the bad ones; and if they see us, the devil a bit of help will I take to Masther Walther. So, good afthernoon, gintlemen!" he said, under his breath. And stooping down, he crept back on his hands and knees to where the mule was patiently standing, and then, rising to his feet—

"Pater," he whispered, "if ye click yer fut again a sthone, or give the laste whisper of a squeal, we are all done for; so now come back."

He took hold of the bridle, and tried to turn the mule's head; but, to his horror, the animal now began to show the obstinate side of its character, and, setting its feet firmly upon the ground, refused to budge an inch.

"Now, bad luck to ye!" said Mickey, "haven't I tould ye there's danger ahead? I don't know whether yer father was a mare or yer mother a jack-ass, or whether it was the other way on; but, millia murther, my curses light on the long ears of both of them for making such an ill-conditioned varmint as ye are, to turn upon me at such a time as this. Don't I tell ye," he continued, in a whisper, as he tugged at the bridle—"don't I tell ye that it's murther if we go that way, and we must come back?"

Violence was of no use; and at last, in utter de-

spair, Mickey remembered that he had a little tobacco in his pocket.

"Now, look here, Pater," he said, pulling out the herb, "behave decent, and I'll give ye the last shmoke I have in me pocket. There!"

He held the weed beneath the mule's nose, and it took hold of a wisp, began to nibble it, and directly after it was following Mickey with the meekness of a lamb, while he gave it a taste—just a scrap—from time to time, breathing more freely when he was a few hundred yards from where the ruffians were bivouacked.

"And yet," said Mickey, "there's payple on this airth who say as tibakky is bad! Ah, well, I pity their ignorance."

He dared not hurry the mule, for fear of creating a fresh fit of obstinacy, and from moment to moment he was in dread lest a click of the mule's shoe or a squeal might betray them; but when a mile or so intervened on the backward journey, and he breathed more freely, he thrust back the sorry remnant of tobacco into his pocket, and taking the ramrod from his rifle, laid bare the sharp screw end.

"Now, Pater," he said, "I won't jolther the masther, if I can help it; but if yez play any more pranks wid me, me boy, it isn't tibakky ye'll get, but a taste of this, jist to act as a stimmylant to yer obstinat system."

It was a long, dreary journey back to the place where he branched off from the track which he should have pursued; but shortly before sundown, and full of lamentations, Mickey arrived at the foot of the flat-topped hill, and then began slowly to ascend, mastered it, and, crossing the little plain, guided the mule to the pine-clothed gap.

"Sure, and we might have been at the ranch hours ago, and had plenty to ate and dhrink, and been going back to that poor boy wid help; and here have I been wasting the whole day. Oh, get on, Pater."

It was no easy task for the mule to get on, when descending the gap; for not only was the way excessively slippery with the pine needles, but in addition the pine trunks were so close together that all Mickey's time was taken up in keeping his master from injury.

One way and another, the descent was very slow; and before they were half down Mickey stopped the mule, and listened.

Yes, there was a wailing cry coming up through the trees, sometimes low and sometimes high. It was like the wailing of a woman in distress; and this was enough for chivalrous Mickey, who secured the mule's bridle to a tree, and then, seeing to the priming of his rifle, he set off cautiously, his every sense on the alert.

"Bad luck to the devils," he muttered; "but they'll be on hereaway. Why, suppose that's Miss Kate crying, and it's me that's to have the good luck to rescue her! Bedad, it's a terrible coward I am, I belave, so long as I'm unarmed, though I'm bowld enough wid a bit of shtick in me fist. Annyhow, I'm not the boy to go back when it's me darlin' Miss Kate in trouble. Oh, bedad, I'd behave myself as dacintly in thryng to resky her as I would for that other darlin' down there at the ranch."

"Oh, Mickey, an' it's a great fool an' omadhaun ye are; for if ye'd come the straighth way ye'd have been down there at the ranch, and that darlin' would have given ye yer bit and sup, and laughed at ye. Bedad, I like her to laugh at me, it's almost as nice as when she looks cross."

Another low wail came up from below.

"Oh, sure an' I'm all wrong intirely, an' its what the howly father would call a beautiful dispensation; for if I hadn't gone out ov me way iver so far, I shouldn't have been coming here just in the nick ov time to help Miss Kate. Hould on, darlin', I'm coming."

Mickey's face glowed with excitement, as, with all the desire to boldly dash up to the help of whoever it was calling for aid, he felt bound to proceed cautiously, and try to gain by stratagem what force would fail to obtain.

He knew that if this was his young mistress she would probably be in the hands of several ruffians, and his only chance to help her was by the use of his rifle, while he kept out of sight so as to reload and fire again.

"Sure, darlin', I'm coming!" he said, as another low cry reached his ears. "I'll fight for ye, darlin', like a man; but if I come rushing at 'em, I shall only do for one or two before they do for me, an' then ye'll be no better off than ye were before. Yis, yis, I'm coming."

He crept cautiously on from tree to tree, as another cry came up—his eyes watchful, his ears twitching, and his face a perfect study. Now he crawled on all-fours; and then, finding a suitable place, lay on his back, holding his rifle in front, and allowed himself to slide down the slope over the slippery needles, getting over the ground tolerably fast.

"Sure, and I'd make a wonderfully fine wild Injun," he muttered. "I know their ways, and I'll be down upon 'em soon wid a shot or two. Yes, that's the way, me boy; creep from tree to tree, yer rifle in front, and a steady aim when ye first see one of the evil-minded devils. Oh, hark at that now!"

Mickey gave quite a shiver, for the same sobbing cry came up again, and he could hardly restrain himself from leaping up and running to the sufferer's help.

"She's calling, sure enough; but it's a deal farther off than I thought it was. The sounds come up plainer than they go down, so they won't hear me coming. It'll be hot for some one directly, and the devil a' bit o' time I'll give anny one to say pater or ave."

He crept on, listening and attentive, to make out at last that the cry came from a denser part of the gap, about two-thirds of the way down, where the pines were smaller, closer together, and made thicker still by the undergrowth and seedlings, running up so as to form quite a thicket.

"They've got a bit of a camp there, and they're bivouacking, as the sojers call it. Annyhow, it's all one to me, only I'd rather the place was more open, so that I could see them betther."

Creeping cautiously on, Mickey reached the denser part, and entered it, going on more slowly now, for the noise had ceased. In fact, he penetrated the thicket for some hundred yards without hearing a

sound, and paused at last, startled at the terrible solitude and silence.

"Sure, it couldn't be a banshee, 'could it?" he muttered. "Banshees never cross the say as iver I heard; and yet it's strange. Howly saints preserve us! I'll never go so far as to shoot at a sperrit."

He paused and listened, wiping the great trickling drops of sweat from his face, as they ran down and tickled him.

"Sure, an' this is more terrible than foighting a dozen rapparees. Howly Bridget, what'll I do now! It's wood daymons, and all sorts of ayvil bastes, and—hark at that!"

For now from behind him, instead of from below, rose up the most terrible cry he had ever heard.

Police Notes.

"AND he took her down to Great Scotland-yard, for to hear the Bobbies' brass band." It is a sublime spectacle, and worthy the pencil of a Landseer. Peace portrayed, civilization canonized, order in its moments of rest and refreshment.

We have heard the Guards—Grenadier, Fusilier, and Coldstream, First and Second Life, and Blue; we have been delighted with the silver kettledrums—far more so than with their equine namesake, who "let us in for it" when he won the Derby; we have listened to the Guides, and to the band of the Commissionnaires; but who would hear their performances when he could visit Great Scotland-yard, and hear the Bobbies' brass band? 'Tis not merely the listening to an overture, or carefully executed concerto, for there is the feeling the indescribable something that comes over the spirit as we gaze upon the men of order solemnly acquitting themselves of this crotchety duty; moving on themselves in slow movements, stooping even to the love of the bass; preserving the even tenor of their way; handling the staff like true musicians; looking sharp after the flats, and recalling at every bar the area railings; loving the minims because they suggest drops; and rattling over quavers, from the way in which they call to mind the tremblings of the evil-doer before the strong arm of the law. Bobby thinks of his nightly promenade as he counts his beats; at the mention of keys, his eye flashes as he thinks of skeletons; while anon a sadness subdues the light of his manly eye from the remembrance of effects of keys upon area gates.

But see, the overture has commenced, and the rolling eyes that take in everything at a glance are now fixed upon the music stand. Behold yon stalwart form, and look how the vast hollow drum is belaboured. The satisfaction evinced as the sonorous reverberations are rumbled forth is a study of itself. Look at that third part of a Laocoön group struggling with the convolutions of the great brazen serpent that wraps his brawny shoulders. From whence are the groans? They might be from the man, but must be from the tremendous trump. "Blow winds, and crack your cheeks;" but Bobbies do not so. Still the distension is something tremendous. The facial muscle cannot but suffer, especially as a Bobby's countenance is never subject to relaxation. Bobby is scarcely ever known to

smile ; and even now, in his hours of relaxation—in fact, when he is playing—he performs his part with a solemnity that could only be equalled if he were engaged upon the “Dead March.” It might be expected, from the throng of admiring fair around, that something approaching a smile might be seen upon his lip ; but no, even to the man who clashes the cymbals, everything is solidity itself.

But Bobby needs the strong arm of the conductor to restrain his impatient zeal. All goes well until the runs are reached, when, but for the disciplining wand, Bobby would grow excited, and in the imaginary pursuit of an escaped prisoner, overstep the bounds prescribed by musical law.

We look around—Mary is here, Hann is here, Jane is here; and they all linger as though oppressed with the idea that they are wanted at home—that missus is calling ; and so, in fidgety mood, they tarry, for the strains are entrancing, and they cannot leave—while even in this direction no smiles wander ; for, in spite of his amative nature, Bobby will look as blue in countenance as he does in dress.

As his biographer, how shall I fulfil the onerous duties I have undertaken as the motive-power of the apostrophized? how shall I fulfil my duties? Why, as Bobby himself would say, I shall write it “from information I received,” aided and abetted by what I have seen, heard, felt, smelt (rat-fashion), and tasted in a rather unpleasant manner in the fruits of experience.

Bobby shall speak himself. Down upon the mahogany study table shall fall the blows from his truncheon, and out shall Bobby rap his own history. Magnetic, odic, electric, galvanic—all forces of that nature may avaunt; for we will have that mightier force in action—police force. So here join hands, make the table spin, preserve silence, be nimble with the alphabet, and I'll be clerk to preserve the history. Lie still, all other mighty ones of earth ; we want no Caesars or Alexanders, no statesmen, or any other class of old women ; relatives may stay, for in our dealings with the spirit world, we summon only from the great, invisible blue.

A shudder passes through the circle—the table raps—music of an entrancing kind is heard, spirit music—“Home, sweet home ;” and then, with mighty hard, bruising raps, announces himself—

“A Z, 785.

“ Been in the force seven years, and gets 20s. a week ; used to have only 18s. And it wasn't him as was in the habit of letting gents go when they handed over half-crowns. Never took anybody into custody for wrenching off knockers, cos why, because he couldn't ketch 'em. Did ketch one once, but he got away. Didn't give him a two-shilling piece, but did drop one as he run off. Didn't give the two-shilling piece back, as he couldn't ketch the gentleman, but should have done if he had kotched him. Didn't think it worth while to give it to the inspector. Declined to say what he did with it; expect he spent it, as he always thought money was to spend. Always liked to get things for nothing if he could, but never liked bribery. Had taken a glass now and then, when it was offered to him ; but never arst for

it at any time. Was not him who wheeled the costermonger's cabbage barrow away. Did not know why he answered all these questions. Supposed he was obliged. Never made up a case against a drunken man in his life. Swear he didn't. Would swear it though he was on his oath. Would stand there and swear it. Blowed if he ever did, there. Expected he did know how many beans made five ; knew that when he was a boy. What were his perquisites? Wasn't such a fool as to tell. Wouldn't answer that question, even if put in the witness-box and badgered by Mr. Barbe. Might be what he got from servant maids, but was not going to say. Considered himself a man of honour. Didn't consider himself a gentleman, but knew what was what. Never got drunk on duty, but was once rather tight. Inspector didn't know of it, or he would have been wiggled.

“How about Buggins? That was his business. Didn't concern anybody but himself. Didn't drink sherry, but had no objection to a drop of something short. Didn't care if it was whiskey. Liked Scotch best, when he couldn't get Irish. Yes, would take another.

“Buggins's affair was his own fault, and he was lagged for it ; and couldn't say he should quite like to see him again. Never put him up to the burglary, and then watched for him. Buggins used to go after the housemaid at 24, Greatague-square, where all the aspen trees is, and where number you know who's beat was. Well, yes, she was a pretty gal, and used to wear one of them little caps, that hadn't no strings, and has to be pinned on to the hair, to keep them from flying off. She was a black-eyed one, with red cheeks, and hair as matched her eyes. Nice waist she had, and looked as pretty a piece of goods as e'er a policeman would like to have behind his teatray. But certainly at one time she didn't use to take much notice of policemen, though she did after.

“Buggins was the greengrocer's young man round in Crofford-street, and he and Mary used to go out on Sundays, and was going to be married right off, and keep a greengrocer's shop of their own somewhere not far off ; and a very nice couple they looked when they went out, and 'specially when a certain policeman and Buggins's sister went with 'em one day down to Hampton Court in a pleasure van, as started from a greengrocer's down in Ashley-street ; and pleasant it was, only so many people would take baskets, and when baskets with meat pies in was put down on the floor, and other people came in and couldn't see under other people's petticoats, and put their boots right into the dish, through the crust, and made all the gravy squirt out, why whose fault was it but them as brought them?

“It was a nice day that was, and Mary looked stunning in a white muslin that stood out ever so far all round ; and all might have gone off beautiful, only Buggins would keep leaving his sister, who was all pitted with the small-pox, and had no eyebrows to signify, for the policeman to take care of, when he could have done a deal better with the housemaid. And it was just the same when they got down to the Court, and got out of the van, and the young men that rode

outside took down their pocket 'andkerchers that had been flying on their sticks, and all on them went into the gardings. There was Buggins a tagging after Mary the whole day, and no doubt thinking with his ginger whiskers that he was a making himself merry agreeable. But he wasn't so precious fast at stumping up when the beer had to be paid for, nor yet tipping for the water-creeses, and hot water and milk at ninepence a head; but some fellows always brings their belongings with them into company, and p'raps if Mary had known as him as she was walking with was going to be a convick, p'raps then she'd have taken more notice of a certain person. Of course, it was disgusting the way in which that handkercher kept being thrown about when they was a playing kiss in the ring arter tea in the park; but, Lord bless you, I didn't care. I had—that is, I mean, a certain person had—two penny pickwicks under the trees, and two pints of porter; so as I—as he—didn't care, only he thought as a certain young woman might have been a little more higher, and not have let herself be towzled and rumpled about in the way as they were a going on there. But at last it was time to start back, and Buggins's sister hooks herself on to the policeman, and squeezes his arm, and sez—

"Don't they two look nice?"

"Meaning Mary and Buggins."

"Some people may think so," the policeman says, "but I don't."

"And then it was a growing dark, and the man as drove down was so jolly tight as he couldn't sit on the box, and had got all the reins in a tangle, so as the 'osses got their legs twisted in them; and then, when they wouldn't let him drive, he began to cuss and swear, and all the women began to scream and kick up a row; for there was no one else to drive till Buggins was obliged to say as he could, and had to sit up on the box to do it.

"And then Mary got inside, and the policeman in plain clothes got in too, and somehow, in the dark, left Buggins's sister at the beginning of the van, and he found hisself a sitting next to Mary, and holding his arm behind her back to keep the edge of the van from hurting her; and, poor little thing, she was so tired that, what with the van shaking, and Buggins driving very slowly, she almost went to sleep, and leant ever so much up against the policeman all the way up to Lambeth.

"That night was the beginning of the change, for that very same policeman took Buggins only a fortnight after for being in the burglary at the shoemaker's shop; and, whether he was guilty or not, the jury said he was when his trial came on, and he got three years on it; and six months arter Mary married that very policeman, which might have been A Z, 785."

ACCORDING to an advertisement in the *Queen* newspaper, a "lady of rank" wishes to dispose of her "exquisite paste diamonds," which she describes as being equal in appearance to real stones, and to have been copied from the family jewels. "All that glitters," &c., as the copybooks say. Things must be in a bad way when a "lady of rank" owns to the paste diamonds, and copied, too, from the family jewels.

A Combat Aloft.

A SMALL United States war vessel, the *Winthrop*, with five guns, was cruising off the coast of Africa in search of a slaver, which had been reported to have lately sailed from Hayti, West Indies.

One day a strong gale drove the vessel shoreward. Captain Williams, who commanded, just saved her by dropping both anchors within about twenty fathoms of the coast of Guinea, a few miles below Cape Palmas.

The vessel dragging, he was finally obliged to anchor by the stern.

This held the ship, although she was now scarcely fifteen feet from land, right under a huge tree, one of the branches of which almost touched her yard.

The sun had just gone down in a mass of black clouds, edged with fiery tints like lines of gold and silver.

Darkness gradually gathered. Soon the gale abated, although the heavens were yet black with clouds hiding the moon, and throwing an impenetrable gloom over all objects.

Suddenly strange noises filled the woods, extending some way back from the rocky shore, near which the craft was anchored.

The crew listened in wonder.

Unearthly screams and shrieks, mingled with a peculiar hissing, were heard.

"Don't like that," said Captain Williams. "The woods must be full of natives, who, perhaps, take us for the slaver, and are meditating an attack. Clear away the quarter-boat and the long-boat, Mr. Davis, and have both manned with good men, well armed. We must look into this matter."

"Aye, aye, sir," answered Mr. Davis, who was the first lieutenant.

The order was soon obeyed.

"Mr. Thomas and Mr. Graves," said the captain to the midshipman and the master's mate, "I shall go ashore myself; so we leave the vessel in your charge. Keep a good look-out. Although I have taken the whole crew, I will leave ten men, with one of our boats, near enough to hear any alarm you may give."

The next moment the two boats were being pulled shoreward, and the young officers, with the cook, the cabin-boy, and steward, were the sole occupants of the vessel.

The three latter were in their berths, sleeping so soundly that the report of a cannon could hardly have waked them.

The midshipman, Mr. Thomas, and Graves, the master's mate, mounted to the cross-trees.

"I say," said Graves, "only look here. I can get right up this tree. This is being pretty close ashore, my boy."

"Yes," said Thomas; "but you had better stop where you are. Don't be an ass."

"Something to talk about, my boy," said Graves—"something to tell them when we get home. No one will believe that I climbed off the yard into a tree."

"Well, what of that?" said Thomas. "There, stay here, man. Recollect we are in charge of the ship."

"Yes," said the other. "What induced the skipper to go ashore like that?"

As he spoke, he crept from the yard to the branch of the tree mentioned, and ensconced himself near the trunk, about twelve feet from his shipmate, who remained upon the yard.

The two kept up an animated conversation.

"Do you see anything of our men, now, Graves?" Thomas at length inquired.

The latter did not answer. Thomas repeated his question, with no better result.



"BELOW THE SPAR." — (page 190.)

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"Strange!" thought he.

At that moment he fancied he heard a gasping shriek, so smothered that it sounded something like the wail of a child. Then came a sort of crashing noise, like the falling of a body through thick branches.

"Either he has fallen or is making fun," muttered Thomas, who well knew the waggish propensities of his shipmate. "Graves! I say, Graves!" he exclaimed, standing up, and peering through the darkness.

There was no response.

Really concerned about his friend, the midshipman was about crawling out upon the branch, when, through the gloom, he beheld the outlines of a form, and caught the momentary gleam of a pair of bright eyes, sparkling as if with wild merriment.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Thomas. "You joker, you! Better not try that again, Graves."

Still Graves did not answer.

Determined not to encourage his fun, Thomas now retreated to the end of the yard, and sat astraddle upon it, his heel on the stirrup.

Then he saw the dark body dimly revealed, crawling along the branch towards the yard.

"Back to your post, Graves," he cried. "We came up here to keep a look-out, not to skylark."

As before—no response.

The form was now upon the yard, crawling out towards the young man, apparently on "all fours."

Thomas, knowing his comrade not to be a very active gymnast, was surprised. It also struck him that, as well as he could see in the darkness, the proportions of his friend had strangely increased in size.

Another curious fact impressed him. The mate's eyes, not naturally very large, now glowed out like great balls of fire.

The moon emerging from behind a cloud, and throwing a broad glare of light on every object, revealed the figure of the intruder in all its terrible hideousness.

Not the master's mate this, but a huge, hairy gorilla, with flaming eyes, jaw protruding, and long teeth disclosed, as its great mouth was opened to its full extent!

The suddenness of this discovery for a moment took away the self-possession of the young midshipman. His brain grew dizzy; his blood was chilled; he trembled in every limb.

The bravest man in the world might have been similarly affected under the circumstances, which were certainly of a most trying nature.

Here was the youth, all alone, near the end of the yard, with no arms except a small clasp-knife in his pocket, and no way of retreat open to him.

The gorilla being between him and the mast, he was thus debarred from running inward, while two steps backward would precipitate him over the end of the yard, to be dashed to pieces on the deck below.

On came the hateful beast, nearer and nearer.

Glancing wildly around him, and seeing nothing of the departed men or their boats, he gave himself up for lost.

Nerving himself at last to do his best, he drew his clasp-knife, resolved at least to strike one good blow in his defence.

Meanwhile, with all his might he shouted; but so terrific was now become the din in the woods, that he doubted if he was heard by his shipmates.

When within two feet, the gorilla sprang at him, clutching the yard with one claw, and burying the other in his shoulder. The blow almost knocked him from his hold.

Writhing with pain as the claw was withdrawn for another blow, and the huge jaw came down with a snap

for his throat, he aimed a blow with his knife at the creature's neck.

The gorilla, seizing the knife between its teeth, jerked it from his hand, and the weapon fell to the deck.

The beast again struck him, and strove to clutch his white neck in its terrible fangs. Thomas, however, drawing far back, the monster only got his jacket in its teeth.

He wrenched himself quickly from it, to receive upon his breast a blow that knocked him over. He clutched the yard. The gorilla, bending over, would the next moment have caught his whole head in his huge jaws, but for his letting himself quickly down to the stirrup.

There he clung for a moment, out of the reach of his enemy. The latter, however, now winding its limbs round the yard, stooped over, and a second time came near getting its jaw over his head.

Fortunately, a loose rope, one of the gaskets, was near the young man, who, now clutching it, lowered himself along the rope to the end, and there hung suspended, six feet below the spar, and fifty from the deck.

The gorilla, with horrible cries of rage, at once commenced gnawing at the rope, seemingly determined to destroy in this way its antagonist, who had got beyond the reach of its fangs and claws.

Thomas realized the full peril of his situation. Right beneath him lay a spare anchor, upon which he must fall when the strands of the rope should part. In the pale moonbeams, the eyeballs of the hairy fiend above him seemed to glow with a green lustre, as his teeth snapped at the cord. One of the strands was already cut through. In one minute all would be over.

Hanging thus between life and death, Thomas had given up all hope, when he heard the simultaneous crack of many rifles; and with one long, wild scream, the gorilla fell whizzing past him, crashing to the deck with four bullets in its body.

Thomas easily succeeded in regaining the yard. He then beheld his rescuers, some of the crew of the quarter-boat, who, arriving aboard, had mounted the rigging to save him.

Having discovered that the strange noises which had drawn them ashore were made by wild birds, apes, and other animals, they had set out on their return, fortunately in time to hear his cries for assistance.

The midshipman, descending to the deck, soon told his story; when, the body of the dead gorilla being thrown overboard, a party went to the foot of the tree on the bank, to there discover the torn and mangled remains of the poor fellow whom the savage beast had made its victim ere attacking Thomas.

The body was buried ashore that night, and the vessel sailed the following morning.

Years have passed since then; and Thomas, now captain of a fine war-vessel, has faced many perils, but in none has he experienced the horrible sensations felt on that night when he was attacked by an African gorilla.

The Washington Chronicle wants to know how many children the "mother-of-pearl" had. She'll never tell.

An old farmer said to his sons, "Boys, don't you ever spekerlate, or wait for somethin' to turn up. You might just as well go and sit down on a stone in the middle of a medder, with a pail 'twixt your legs, and wait for a cow to back up to you to be milked."

A COUNTRY editor received the following:—"Dear Sir—I have looked carefully and patiently over your paper for months for the death of some individual I was acquainted with, but as yet not a single soul I care anything about has dropped off; you will please to have my name erased."

A Leaf of Gold.**CHAPTER VI.**

THE wild, tangled look of the trees and foliage about the grass-grown courtyard brings a whole train of recollections into active life in my mind.

"Then rode Geraint into the castle court,
His charger trampling many a prickly star
Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.
He looked, and saw that all was ruinous."

I sit down upon the mossy bricks that edge a disused fountain, and already Geraint has dismounted, and is surveying the shattered remnants of a decayed magnificence.

But hark, what is that?

Not Enid's song, although it comes through the open casement :

"And as the sweet voice of a bird,
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,
Moves him to think what kind of bird it is—"

so those rich, low, thrilling notes stir my very soul as I sit by that silent fountain, in the grassy courtyard, with the wild flowers blowing in the soft wind about me, and making every crumbling stone gay with beauty, and the summer limes and elms throwing their shadows near me, with the doves and sky above my head.

What can such music mean?

It stirs in me a thousand unknown thoughts and fancies.

I rise, I sigh, I throw off my light scarf, and press my hands over my heart. What is that music revealing to me? It is like the echo of a long-dreamt dream.

I listen to the far-away, mournful sounds, until I can remain away no longer.

I am quite alone.

I steal gradually to the window from whence the sound proceeds; but the music does not increase in volume as I approach. The sweet, plaintive notes retain their dream-like quality. I stand spellbound under the window. The tall lupins reach to my waist, and hundreds of roses—white, and oh, so sweet!—are blowing around me as I lean on the slender trellis-work that surrounds the casement. Again the voice sings to me—

"When all was young, and pleasant May was blooming,
I, thy poor friend, took part with thee in play."

Oh, God! I know those words. I have heard them in that far-away life I may not live again. A terrible darting pain in my head causes me to moan aloud. Ten thousand dancing rays of light seem breaking up the dark and formless cloud that has so long obscured my mental consciousness. I press both hands over my throbbing brow, and still the voice sings on—

"We were not born with true love to trifle,
Nor born to part because the wind blows cold;
What though the storm the summer garden rife,
Still on the bough is left a leaf of gold."

"A leaf of gold—a leaf of gold!"
My agonized cry causes the music to cease;

angry voices and angrier contention are going on within the enchanted room whence the spirit music has reached me.

The very depths of my soul are troubled—those hidden depths about which I know so little, so little!

"You will not speak to her?"
"I will, by all that is sacred!"

The door that leads to the courtyard is flung widely open; a man, young and handsome, springs down the steps, and, suddenly checking himself, stands a few paces from me.

I am faint, I gasp for breath. The world recedes from me, and the cloud falls from my brain for ever.

Who am I, and who is he?
If he would only speak.

"Isabel—"

But that is enough; the long and desolate days in which I have not known my love are gone for ever. All things return to me with the melody of that one word: the love, the grief, the farewell, the desolation, the leaf of gold. I cannot speak his name. I am stunned by the fast-flowing tide of recollection. His arms are round me, he is talking to me in low, eager words, and his kisses fall ever and anon upon my pale, smiling face.

But this must stop—I must shriek, or grow calm, or my brain will burst.

God is good to me.

With a sigh that almost breaks my heart in twain, I fall senseless on his shoulder.

When I awake, I retain the memory of what has happened.

Oh, blessed, blessed consciousness! Bruce is kneeling by my side among the lupins, which are all crushed and broken beneath his feet.

Grace, almost wild with terror, holds me in her arms; and Maud—yes, Maud Rutherford—is weeping silently behind her.

I open my eyes, I almost think I am dreaming; then I stretch my arms to my dear, dear love.

"Has Maud released you?" I ask.

Maud answers me, with her lovely shining eyes still aglow with tears.

"My darling, he is all your own; and he is worthy of your love."

"I think I would like to die now," I whisper, faintly—"I am so happy."

But I am happier still as the days go on—oh, so very happy! Nothing is explained to me, nothing is told me that would necessitate any thinking on my part. I am simply and perfectly happy. Arthur is very kind to Bruce. They meet as old friends; they ride, and walk out, and talk together as they did years ago, and their friendship does not seem a forced one on either side. Maud has returned to Weldon, and Grace is fast recovering her health and good spirits. And Bruce and I—shall we ever forget these glorious summer days?

In that quiet, sunny garden, shut in from all care and noise, and worldly strife, where the flowers seemed sweeter, and the brown bees busier, than in our own changeful clime; beneath the bluest skies, the largest moons, and softest, mellow twilight, we wandered and dreamed as lovers; and the reality was so full, so sweet, so passionate, that my fancies fled for ever to their own shadowy, subjective land, and

no maiden of romance had so true a knight, so brave a heart, so true a lover as I, who for months had peopled my favourite haunts with the ideal creatures of my fancy, and forgotten how the real love would surpass them all; so unutterably beautiful is first, happy love.

"Methinks, might that sweet season last
In which our first love-dream is past,
Ere doubts and fears and jealous pains
Are flaws in the heart's diamond chains,
Men might forget to think of heaven,
And yet have the sweet sin forgiven."

Health and strength return to me in double portion.

No one ever speaks of my long illness, or the terrible blank that followed it. Bruce is ever at my side, devoting himself to me. He appears only to live to make me perfectly and passionately happy.

Sometimes I question him about the name and fame he is to earn; but he tells me they will come when he has made sure of his love, when she is always with him, to fill his heart and home with happiness.

Arthur does not wish me to be married yet. He thinks I am too young and delicate. But Bruce declares he will not part with me; and I hope he never will. Perhaps I am too young to marry; but I cannot part from Bruce and live.

My life is bound up in his presence, and only will I live so long as he loves me.

It is in the autumn when we return home. We have been away almost a year.

My heart is so full of love, and thankfulness, and tender memories, that I cannot look at the dear lanes as we drive through them.

Fortunately, Arthur has kept our coming a secret, so we escape any outward demonstration on the part of the villagers; but when our carriage turns up the old gravel walk, and Susan meets us at the door, and the smell of home-made bread greets us in the hall, and the birds are singing as usual, and Gracie's Cochins are walking over the front garden beds, because, in the excitement of our arrival, John forgot to close the gate, why I feel just like falling on my knees and embracing everybody—Susan, John, birds, fowls, flowers, and everything I see, in an ecstasy of home love.

Grace does not betray the same exuberant joy; and I forget for a moment that this is a new home to her.

How it delights me to play the part of hostess on this first night home; and Bruce is our guest, too.

He and his uncle have quarrelled, beyond any hope of a reconciliation, so Grace says; and while Maud remains there he will not go to the Hall again.

But the Hall was never a loved home to him.

After tea, having held a dozen different receptions, some in the dining-room, but more in the kitchen, Bruce and I steal away, and inspect the church, the field, the barn, by the light of a glorious new-risen moon.

The corn is golden for the harvest, and stands in huge shocks upon the uplands, ready to be garnered. The golden autumn leaves lie thickly on the elm avenue, and cover up the mossy paths in the dear old garden.

I stoop and gather a cluster of the brightest of them, and Bruce makes them into a crown, and puts it upon my head, and vows he will paint me so, just as I stand, in my warm white dress and leafy adornment. We visit each nook and cranny about the farm; and I wonder a little what Grace will do with the cottage, and whether she will sell or let it; and I feel a little sad—just a little—when Bruce speaks of returning to town in a few days.

"We have been so happy, and now we must part." A shadow has already come over my happiness. I turn away, and sigh to myself.

Bruce clasps me in his arms, and kisses back my smiles.

"Do not be afraid to marry me," he says, with trembling voice; "and do not dream I would take you, my country flower, to pine and wither in the glare and noise of London life. No, Isabel. I go to London purely on business; and in the meantime I leave you and Grace to settle about the furniture and belongings of the cottage, which is mine now, Isabel, and in which we will live when we are married."

"Oh, Bruce, how good—how kind of you! You must have read my heart's one wish," I say, with all my deep joy speaking in my voice. "I love you dearly, Bruce, and I would go with you to the end of the world; but it is so pleasant to think of living with you at home."

I press closer to him, and wonder if there was ever girl before me so blessed as I am. The apple tree in Grace's garden looms darkly through the fair, soft light, and the dear little white cottage just allows us to see how cosily it nestles among its tree protectors.

"Of what are you thinking, dear?"

"Of my great, great happiness. Do you believe it will last?"

"I cannot see how it can pass away, when once you are my wife."

A slight shudder passes over me; the wind is growing cold.

"Do not go away," I say, passionately; "let us be married first, and take me with you to London for my honeymoon."

"Bruce! Isabel! How careless of you. Do you not see the dew is falling?"

It is Arthur's voice, calling to us from over the wall.

He holds out to Bruce a thick woollen shawl, and warns us again against the dampness of the air.

Bruce folds the shawl about me, and we walk home in almost silence, so deep is our happiness.

A week later, and Grace enters my room early in the morning, with a crown of golden leaves in her hand.

"I wish you had let me put a few flowers among them; but you must wear your pearls in your hair."

She lays the wreath upon my dressing-table, and the sunlight makes it glitter and sparkle like a crown of jewels; by its side are two old-fashioned pearl bracelets, and the veil of Chantilly lace.

"The bracelets and veil are yours, Grace, and you must wear them some time or other, even if you have to be married over again to do it. I have a fancy

that this lace carries a charm about it that concerns the mistress of this house. Do wear it, darling, if only to please me."

"But I am not the bride this time," answers Grace, laughing; "and its charm should work as much for you, who own it, as for me, who am a stranger to its virtues."

"I want nothing beyond my leaves of gold. Do you know, darling, I have wondered much lately why some things affect us so much more than others. No flower that blows could tell me what these fading leaves do. To me they are emblems of the sweetest love and most perfect faith on earth."

The music of children's voices breaks across our talk. I listen for a few moments, then the truth reveals itself.

They are celebrating my wedding morning—my happy, happy wedding morning.

I put on my soft muslin dress, and my bridal crown, and go down with Grace to the kindly people assembled to do me honour. None of Bruce's friends are present, save Maud, who is my one bridesmaid.

Presently Dr. Allen comes. He is to give me away; and Bruce and Arthur walk on to the church, and we follow close behind them, and the children throw flowers before me, and the sun shines brightly, and by Estelle Damer's tomb we are married, Bruce and I. And the bells ring, and the children smile, and some old people cry, and there is nothing more to be said; for my happiness is complete, and no power on earth can separate us now.

THE END.

Stolen Secrets.

A MANUFACTURER in these our days holds his own against competition by force of capital, knowledge of science, and skill of workmen. He has no secret beyond that of producing the best article at the lowest price. One hundred years ago the case was different. What a man discovered in the arts he concealed. Workmen were put upon their oath, in the name of God, never to reveal the processes used by their employers. Doors were kept closed, artizans going out were searched, visitors were rigorously excluded from admission, and false operations blinded the workmen themselves. The mysteries of every craft were hedged in by quickset fences of empirical pretension and judicial affirmation.

The royal manufactories of porcelain, for example, were long carried on in Europe with a spirit of jealous exclusiveness. His Majesty of Saxony was especially circumspect. Not content with the oath of secrecy imposed upon his workpeople, he would not abate his kingly suspicion in favour of a brother monarch. Neither king nor king's delegate might enter within the tabooed walls of Meissen. What is erroneously called the "Dresden" porcelain—that exquisite pottery of which the world has never seen the like—was produced for two hundred years by a process so secret that neither the bribery of princes nor the garrulity of operatives ever revealed it.

There used to be, close by Temple Bar, in London, an old chemist's shop. The proprietor of it, in days gone by, enjoyed the monopoly of making citric acid.

More favourably circumstanced than other secret manufacturers, his was a process that required no assistance. He employed no workmen. Experts came to sample, and assort, and bottle his products. They never entered the laboratory. The mystic operations by which he grew rich were confined to himself.

One day, having locked the doors and blinded the windows, sure as usual of the safety of his secret, our chemist went home to dinner. A chimney-sweep, or a boy disguised as such, wide-awake in chemistry, was on the watch. Following the secret-keeper so far on his way to Charing Cross as to be sure he would not return that day, the sooty philosopher hied rapidly back to Temple Bar, ascended the low building, dropped down the flue, saw all he wanted, and returned, carrying with him the mystery of making citric acid. The monopoly of the inventor was gone. A few months after, and the price of the article was reduced four-fifths. The poor man was heart-broken, and died shortly afterwards, ignorant of the trick by which he had been victimized. Like Miss Tabitha Bramble, when informed that the thunder had spoiled two barrels of beer in her cellar, he might have said—"How the thunder should get there, when the cellar was double-locked, I can't comprehend."

The manufacture of tin-ware in England originated in a stolen secret. Few readers need to be informed that tin-ware is simply thin iron plated with tin by being dipped into the molten metal. In theory it is an easy matter to clean the surface of iron, dip it into a bath of the boiling tin, and remove it, enveloped with the silvery metal, to a place for cooling. In practice, however, the process is one of the most difficult in the arts. It was discovered in Holland, and guarded from publicity with the utmost vigilance for nearly half a century. England tried in vain to discover the secret, until James Sherman, a Cornish miner, crossed the Channel, insinuated himself surreptitiously into a tin-plate manufactory, made himself master of the secret, and brought it home.

The history of cast-steel presents a curious instance of a manufacturing secret stealthily obtained under the cloak of an appeal to philanthropy. The main distinction between iron and steel, as everybody knows, is that the latter contains carbon. The one is converted into the other by being heated for a considerable time in contact with powdered charcoal in an iron box. Now, steel thus made is unequal. The middle of a bar is more carbonized than the ends, and the surface more than the centre. It is, therefore, unreliable. Uniform work cannot be made out of it. For many purposes it will answer, but where accuracy is required it fails. Nevertheless, before the invention of cast-steel there was nothing better.

In 1760 there lived at Attercliffe, near Sheffield, a watchmaker named Huntsman. He became dissatisfied with the watch-springs in use, and set himself to the task of making them homogenous.

"If," thought he, "I can melt a piece of steel and cast it into an ingot, its composition should be the same throughout."

He succeeded. His steel became famous. Huntsman's ingots for fine work were in universal demand. He did not call them cast-steel. That was his secret. About 1770, a large manufactory of this peculiar steel was established at Attercliffe. The process was wrap-

ped in secrecy by every means within reach—true and faithful men hired, the work divided and subdivided, large wages paid, and stringent oaths administered. It did not answer. One mid-winter night, as the tall chimneys of the Attercliffe steel works belched forth their smoke, a traveller knocked at the gate. It was bitterly cold; the snow fell fast, and the wind howled across the moor. The stranger, apparently a ploughman or agricultural labourer seeking shelter from the storm, awakened no suspicion. Scanning the wayfarer closely, and moved by motives of humanity, the foreman granted his request, and let him in.

Feigning to be worn-out with cold and fatigue, the poor fellow sank upon the floor, and soon appeared to be asleep. That, however, was far from his intention. He closed his eyes apparently only. He saw workmen cut bars of steel into bits, place them in crucibles, and thrust the crucibles into a furnace. The fire was urged to its extreme power, until the steel was melted. Clothed in wet rags, to protect themselves from the heat, the workmen drew out the glowing crucibles, and poured their contents into a mould. Mr. Huntsman's factory had nothing more to disclose. The secret of making cast-steel had been found.

A Frightful Affair.

IT was a gloomy night in the month of December, 1862, as we hurried home to our palatial residence at Notting-hill. Though wearied with the business of the day, we were afoot; for a Hansom cab-man had asked us double the lawful fare, and we had rejected him with scorn. The 'buses were all full, and the conductors of those we tried to stop gazed upon us like oilskin statues set upon moving pedestals. But, like many men of small stature, we possess a soul of too great a capacity to be troubled by the littlenesses of life. What did we do, then? Why, we tucked up our trousers and walked.

The weather grew worse as we strode manfully on, and the difficulties we encountered served to make us feel as if the skin were off our temper—it was off our heel, for we had walked up that morning in new boots. A baker ran up against us in Skinner-street, and left his trail on our Inverness cape. We turned our head for a moment, and must needs stumble up against a plaster image man bearing a figure, when we could swear that the ruffian purposely threw down his beastly abortion. Two shillings to pay for damages; and to make matters worse, a grinning young scoundrel must needs offer us the broken-nosed head of Garibaldi, greatly to the delight of the ribald mob in conclave assembled.

We strode on. The pavement of Holborn was, as it were, besmeared with grease, and a dense fog was settling fast upon the benighted city. The lamps were as dingy as tallow dips in a wash-house; and the crossing-sweepers were following the example of the larger tradesmen, and shutting up shop. Holborn was passed, Oxford-street left behind, and we grubbed our way past the Marble Arch, with pleasant thoughts of home simmering in our breast. We had thoroughly warmed to our work, and feeling decidedly better, commenced humming the then popular air of "Did 'em like muffins for tea?" Now, we do approve

of these elastic delicacies for our evening repast, and we mentally wished that Mrs. Scribe might have studied our little weakness upon this occasion. Just then we passed Bobby upon his beat, and a cold shudder chilled us to the very marrow. We had called to mind the garrotting horrors of the time. Recovering ourselves, we pooh-poohed it all; but hurried on notwithstanding, and kept casting furtive glances right and left.

The gate of Kensington Gardens was reached in safety, and in another quarter of an hour we should have been warming our coat tails at our own fire, when—Oh, horror!—misery! Our flesh crawls at the bare recollection—our brain ossifies, and our heart palpitates as we recall the agonizing sensations; in short, the remembrance always makes us feel as though we wanted winding up; for all the scenes of garrotting and violence that we have met with in the public prints rise before our distempered vision like a diabolical phantasmagoria. Our turn had come. We were passing one of those memorial heaps raised by road surveyors and contractors to the great MacAdam, dead or alive, when we felt that we were in the grasp of the evil ones. We gave utterance to a half-suppressed shriek as our throat was compressed; our tongue seemed dry and paralysed, and we could feel that our graceful lineaments were fast turning into the similitude of a curry-eating Bagstock. We struggled with frantic energy, but were immediately pinned by two ruffians in front, who swore with fearful oaths to do for us if we "warn't quiet;" and a deep voice at our ear took up the threat, the words seeming to petrify in our brain, as the sounds hissed from the villain's lips, while the squeeze he gave our throat sent the blood bubbling to our brain.

Watch and purse had gone, and they were trying to tear our breast pin from our scarf. The pin was dear to us from old recollections: 'twas the gift of—We clung to it, but in vain; for the ruffian upon the right dealt us a severe blow upon the right temple, which was followed up by a similar attack on the left, and a hug from behind. Our senses were fast departing, when we heard the sound of approaching wheels. Hope reanimated our breast; but the tiny flame was quenched by the wretch behind, who hissed out—

"All right, my boys; on'y a hingin'."

As the sound of the wheels passed and died away, despair seemed to gift us with superhuman power, and then commenced such a struggle as was never before chronicled by historian. Grasping our enemies in front, with a tremendous effort we swung ourselves round, the weight in each hand acting like the governing balls of a steam engine, and bringing us face to face with the serpent that had coiled round our neck. For an instant we glared in each other's faces, and then, with a tigerish dash, we fixed our teeth in the huge belcher handkerchief which encircled our adversary's throat. The villains then tried to break away, but we had them fast, and our nerves felt as of steel. We swayed to and fro—now up—now down—a writhing mass of human beings. We came in contact with a lamp-post, and it was shivered to atoms. The stones flying from the Mac-Adam heap smashed the windows of the houses near. A prowling dog was drowned in our gore, and a passing cab hurled with fearful violence to the other

side of the road. It was an awful scene for the spectators, but none were present; and the thought flashed across our mind—

"Where are the police?"

We were animated with the power of fifty thousand bulldogs, and victory seemed ready to crown our efforts, when the first policeman arrived. He could do nothing, however, but spring his rattle, and the summons was answered by the loud banging of area gates and the distant trampling of feet. Ten—twenty—a hundred oilskins flashed upon the scene. Bull's-eyes glared upon us, and their bearers circled round, springing their rattles, and striking at us with their staves. We could hear the blows falling with dull thuds upon our bodies, till Bayswater resounded like a carpet-beating ground; but still we presented to the police an enormous Gordian knot—a knot which they could not unravel.

Suddenly there was a crash as of a breaking bandbox—one enemy the less. 'Twas a broken skull. Another crash, with the same effect, and again another. Our enemies were slain, but there was the same fearful compression at our throat from the dead garrotter's grasp. We could not release ourselves, and felt that we were fast losing consciousness, while the murderous villain was reanimating. His head was close to ours, and he groaned at regular intervals. 'Twas all over, and we opened our eyes for a farewell gaze at the foggy earth, and found—

That we were bathed in perspiration, and our Hyperion curls were wet and straight; while the garrotter was no other than Mrs. Scribe, who, with her arms tightly clasping our neck, was cheerfully snoring in our ear.

As friend Jeannes would have said, "Phansy our pheelinx!" The relief and reaction was such, however, that we vowed no devilled kidneys should again pass our lips after ten o'clock p.m.

The English Burial Ground at Scutari.

THE bodies of some eight thousand Englishmen moulder peacefully in this graveyard. I fancy that the remembrance of their deaths might moderate the frenzy of the politicians who seem bent on hounding England on to a fresh war with Russia. Surely these politicians must be mainly young men, or they must have very short memories. Can you not recall, you who are middle-aged, and whose memories are good, those two miserable years between the fight at the Alma and the fall of the Malakoff? Do you remember the Ghost's Derby Day of 1855? Do you remember when, on the Cliff at Brighton and the Marina at St. Leonard's, you could scarcely walk ten paces without meeting groups of ladies and children clad in deepest mourning for their fathers, husbands, brothers, sweethearts, slain in that wretched Chersonese, or who had sickened and died in the cheerless wards of the Scutari Hospital? Are we to have those years of private agony and bereavement, of public blundering and mismanagement, over again? I suppose so. Glory is a very fine thing. I am only a pēkin, a civilian, and I know nothing about glory; but I confess that my blood runs cold, and that my heart sickens, when I hear politicians pertly prating about the "arbitrament of the sword," and "war clearing

the atmosphere," and so forth. I never met glory yet, and I don't know what he or she is like; but I have met War face to face half a dozen times in as many countries. I have looked into the whites, or rather the crimsons, of his eyes, and I have gazed upon the Sisters who follow him wherever he goes. They are Three Sisters, and their names are Rapine, and Disease, and Death. This is, of course, miserably craven and heartless way of looking at War. I cannot help it. I have seen only War's madness and wickedness, its foulness and squalor. To me it has represented nothing but robbery and profligacy, but famine and slaughter; and I can but think that if the warlike politicians were to witness just half an hour of actual warfare as I have witnessed it in America, in Italy, in Mexico, in France, in Spain, their martial valour would cool down a little, and they would not be quite so prompt to blow the belligerent trumpet.—*G. A. Sala in the Illustrated London News.*

Angling for Frogs.

I HAVE lately been introduced to (to me) a novel description of angling—i.e., for frogs.

Having heard of a man who, whilst engaged in that avocation a few days ago, pulled a great snake out of the water, I forthwith ascertained where he lived, and lost no time in calling on him, feeling anxious to learn the art of frog-catching, and hoping at the same time to witness a repetition of the feat above recorded.

I may as well mention, for the benefit of any English coming here who might wish to try the fishing in the Allier, that Antoine (this fisher) lives at the farther end of the Rue de Nismes. As there are no numbers, I must describe his location as being just opposite a shed where lime is burnt.

He would be of service to any one wanting worms or other bait, and he can show the best places for finding snakes and the beautiful green lizards, which I am told are numerous here when it is fine; but we have had such a constant succession of cold and heavy rain since I arrived, that these reptiles have not been showing themselves as they otherwise would have done.

After a short conversation, Antoine most readily undertook to initiate me in the art of frog-fishing, which is simple enough. His rod is merely a long hazel, and at the end of the line, without any hook, a bunch of frog's skin is fastened; this was about the size of a thrush's egg.

Before starting, he showed me a pipkin full of frogs' hind-quarters, all ready for cooking; very white and delicate they looked.

We soon reached a pool formed by the overflow of the river; and standing as far back as he could, to be out of sight, he commenced operations. I directly saw that my best place for observing him would be from the other side, so I went round and hid behind a willow tree.

I remarked that he chiefly relied on the chance of catching frogs that were close to the edge of the water, either in or out of it. So he dropped his bait but a short way in the pool, and drew it towards him with a bobbing motion.

Unfortunately, the day I was out the frogs did not bite well ; but I observed some follow the bait out of water and jump at it. Every now and then he pulled one out, froggy holding on firmly to his defunct neighbour's skin. I am sorry to say no snake came at us, nor could I see any about.

The following day, when I was not with Antoine, he caught ten dozen frogs. They sell at 5d. a dozen ; and he had a run with a snake, which let go before he could land it.

The Egotist's Note-book.

WE have been favoured by Mr. Rowe, of Brompton-road, the manufacturer of the well-known Oroide gold, with a sample of his latest novelty—to wit, the "Derby" pattern Albert chain, which, for quaintness, finished workmanship, and excellent design, equals all his former productions, and their name is legion. It will be welcomed by gentlemen of sporting tastes.

Byron woke up one morning and found himself famous. A Mr. Arthur Lonsdale woke up the other morning, and—through the death of his uncle, Mr. Haywood, the Liverpool banker—found himself a millionaire. Such is the sordid nature of mankind, that, if the choice were offered them, ninety-nine out of a hundred would prefer, without the slightest hesitation, the lot of Mr. Lonsdale to that of Byron.

Another erratic individual has paid a visit to Windsor Castle, under the impression that he was the King of England, and had a right to reside there. He asked to be shown to his apartments in right royal style, as if to the manner born. Being the King of England, he of course did not want to marry the Princess Beatrice, as do most of the members of his unfortunate class. At first the servants took him to be Mr. John de Morgan, until the guard who stopped him described him as a "fresh-complexioned, gentlemanly-looking man."

The Rev. C. H. Collyns, of Wirksworth, Derbyshire, who claims to be descended from "a long line of gouty ancestors," flatters himself that he has driven out the insidious enemy of his race by becoming a vegetarian. The teeth of man, he contends, show that he is not a carnivorous animal, and his digestive organs prove that fruit and vegetables are his proper food. That may be so; but if the gout can be avoided only by abandoning the succulent joint in favour of the pumpkin and the potato, it is to be feared that the general verdict will be similar to that of the late Lord Derby upon some anti-gout champagne submitted to his judgment—"I prefer the gout."

Artemus Ward, on one occasion, expressed his firm resolution to live within his income, even if he borrowed the money to do it with. The Corporation of London is just now in the same position. It possesses property worth, it is estimated, over three millions. Its reserve fund is calculated at about a quarter of a million, and its annual income from rents, &c., amounts to about £120,000. Yet for the

past four years it has been living beyond its income to a serious extent, and it is estimated that for some time to come there will be an annual deficit of about £12,000. Economy, however, is a very unpopular phrase at the Guildhall.

The friends of a young man who had been seized with illness called in the doctor, but the patient positively refused to take the medicine sent him.

On his next visit the doctor somewhat indignantly exclaimed, "Oh, very well ! You can do as you please now ; your life is lost."

"In that case, then, it's of no use to take the medicine, is it ? I'll follow your latest advice."

And he recovered.

"My luck," exclaimed a Bohemian, "is so atrociously bad, that I believe if I were to invest in some soap, washing would go out of fashion to-morrow."

A tourist, the morning after his arrival at Venice, hired a gondola in order to see the city.

Having passed under the Bridge of Sighs, and reached the spot rendered memorable by the mournful history of Marino Faliero, the gondolier took out his watch, and politely said, "We rest for ten minutes here." With that he lighted his pipe.

"What are you waiting for?" asked the traveller.

"Sir," replied the gondolier, "it's the usual time allowed for emotion, for poetic feeling."

And the tourist had to wait till the ten minutes were up.

The other day, at a Convocation party, a young lady who was rather *blase* exclaimed to a friend :—

"Dear me ; more parsons ! The room's full of them. We shall have the whole diocese here directly."

"Well, the stern white, starched muslin is rather to the front," was the reply.

"I never saw so many together before," continued the damsel, who could better have born the presence of dragoons or guards. "I declare it's enough to make one sick."

"Yes," said the friend, "see sick."

A lady, describing to the Countess X—— a young nobleman well known on the turf, said, "He is young, good-looking, and elegant. He is as rich as a Jew, and as imperious as a Turk. But he is dreadfully egotistical."

THE morality of the business world may be considered at a very low ebb, when almost directly a new article has been introduced, and is by universal consent considered a success, worthless imitations of it appear. These imitators trade upon the reputation gained by the original invention, and if not narrowly watched bring it into bad repute. Imitations are in existence of the "New Patent Stocking Suspender," the only safeguard being the name of Almond stamped on every clasp and on the band. Every lady desiring health and comfort should provide herself with a pair of these useful articles, which may be obtained of Mr. H. J. Almond, 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, E.C. Ladies' size, post free, 3s. 2d. per pair. Size of waist required.

The Domestic Confessions of Mrs. Chignal.

THE FIRST.



HAT morning we were sitting at breakfast, and Mr. Chignal's face was covered with that eternal newspaper that he will persist in reading at every meal. I was perusing a letter.

"It's from my aunt, dear," I said.

No answer.

"It's from my aunt, dear," I said again.

"Saw it was," said Mr. Chignal, from behind the paper, "or I should have opened it."

I bit my lips, and left off reading; and

I appeal now to every woman—is there anything more tantalizing than to be talked to like that?

But I swallowed it down—I would not be cross; so I spoke again.

"Woppy!"

No answer.

"Woppy, love!"

By the way, that was a pet name I gave him—I don't know why, but I've always thought it was because he had such long whiskers.

No answer.

"Woppy, darling!"

He gave his paper such a savage rustle that he made me jump.

"Confound it all! will you leave off calling me by that absurd name, Augusta?" he exclaimed.

This was a sign that he was horribly cross; for if he had been good-tempered, he would have called me Pinny.

He snatched up his paper, and began reading again, and this put me out. A moment before, and I was melting into tears; but this coldness froze them up, and I became hard—icy.

"Mr. Chignal," I said, after an interval, and I spoke with great dignity and emphasis, "you always expressed a desire to know the contents of my letters."

"Of course," he grunted, from behind his paper.

"This is from my aunt Tatlock."

I am writing this, and, like all narrators of history, I am confining myself to the truth; but I could never foul my pen or sully my paper by setting down the odious sentence—short, emphatic, and condemnatory—that he applied to my aunt. I was so shocked that I dropped my tea-cup, and threw myself back in my chair.

Down went his paper, and I thought he was coming to soothe me; but nothing of the kind. But for the respect I feel for the man whom so short a time ago I vowed to honour and love, I should say that he

behaved like a brute; but I forbear, and soften down his remarks.

"Am I never to have any peace over my meals?" he cried, savagely. "Can't you let me read my paper in quietness? Here have I been kept awake the whole night by the squalling of that brat."

"Indeed, you're not, sir," I said; "for you were snoring heavily while I was swinging its bassinette."

"It's false, ma'am," he cried, "I didn't close my eyes all night. What the deuce you had the child vaccinated for, I don't know, without it was to annoy me."

"Alfred, you're growing a perfect monster," I said, indignantly.

"And a jolly good job too," he exclaimed. "Here, worn out and worried nearly to death, I come down to get my breakfast, and what do I get?—rolls cold as ice. Look at that, just like india-rubber."

He threw a beautiful French roll against the wall.

"Toast like leather—look at it."

He took a piece of dry toast out of the rack, and rolled it up.

"Eggs boiled hard as bullets. There!"

He actually threw one up to the ceiling, and let it fall back on the table.

"Coffee like so much mud; tea so weak that you were afraid to let it stand to draw; and when at last I take refuge from my miseries in the only comfort I have in life, my *Daily Telegraph*, which I fly to as a well-spring of truth and sweetness, you go on nag, nag, nag, and throw that confounded old mother Tatlock at my head."

"Alfred!" I shrieked, "are you not ashamed to talk like that?"

"No," cried the monster, "I'm not. Want to read her letter? Not I. Just as if I didn't know what she said. She's coming to see us, to stay for a fortnight with her dear children, and she'll make it six weeks or two months; and I'm to pay for flies to Exeter Hall for May meetings, and cabs to take her to hear all her pet parsons, and I'm to be requested not to smoke in the house; and instead of our ordinary meals, we are to have the nice wholesome things that suit dear Aunt Tatlock—boiled soles, and plain boiled rice pudding, and beef tea; and I'm——"

I flew to him just in time, and clapped my hand over his lips, or I feel sure he would have said something horrible.

"You—you wicked creature!" I exclaimed.

"A good thing too," he said, sulkily, as he snatched up his paper.

But I took it away from him, and sat down on his knee, and held his whiskers; for I flatter myself that I am a good wife, and when he gets in a passion I always try to soothe him down.

"Woppy used not to talk like that to his darling Pinny," I said, nestling against him.

"No; nor his darling Pinny used not to be always bothering her Woppy for more money, and then starving him with bad food."

"It isn't his darling Pinny's fault," I said; "it's the wicked, wicked servants. Won't he smile upon his little girl?"

"Little girl!" he said, in a horribly contemptuous way that made my very flesh creep.

"Yes, sir, little girl; you always used to call me

your little girl, with a lot—lots of pretty adjectives to it."

"Ah, but you've grown into a solid noun substantive now," said the wicked monster, "and can run alone without adjectives."

"You're a very, very cruel, cross Woppy this morning," I said; "and you ought not to say such things."

For I was determined to bring him round.

"Ah, you want some money, I suppose," he said, sneeringly.

"Indeed, indeed I don't, Woppy," I exclaimed.

"Now, sir, this minute, look pleasant, take those creases out of your forehead, and smile as thou wert wont to smile."

"Humph, yes—before the weight of care," he said, grinning in his nasty, teasing way. "Can't. There were no babies then."

"That little angel ought to make you smile all the more, sir."

"Yes," he said, "but it don't. It only makes me dream of feeding-bottles; and the bed-room smells of violet powder, scented soap, and sour pap, till I feel quite sick."

"It's all nonsense, Woppy," I said, smiling, though I felt all pins and needles, and could have boxed his ears well, that I could. "You know you are only teasing me."

"I'll show you whether I'm teasing you or not," he said, fiercely. "Now, get up."

I got up, and crossed my hands in front of me, like Mrs. Rousby used to in "Joan of Arc," and looked as patient as a lamb; though all the time there was a very volcano smouldering in my breast.

"Now, madam, if you please," he said, in that nasty hectoring, dictatorial way of his, which is for all the world like taking a clothes-prop to kill a fly, for if he only asked me nicely I should do exactly as he wished—"now, madam," he said, "you will just take pen, ink, and paper, and write to mother Tatlock."

"You will please to remember, Alfred," I said, "that we have great expectations from Aunt Tatlock. She has no one else to leave her money to but us."

"Hasn't she?" he said, sneeringly. "No societies, no pet parsons, no Dorcas charities, no hospitals? Oh, dear no! I'm not going to wait for her old list slippers, and spend a fortune over the stingy old cat."

This was too much—it was more than flesh and blood could bear, and I burst out—

"Alfred! I cannot stand here and submit to that worthy old lady being called by such gross, objectionable names."

"Bah!" he said, spitefully, "then sit down and listen."

That's just his little, narrow, teasing way when he is put out, and he went on—

"Write and tell her she can't come—she wrote to say she was coming, didn't she?"

"Yes, Alfred," I said.

"Then do as I tell you—say she can't come, for the house is topsy-turvy; that the baby's been vaccinated, and took badly; that I'm horribly cross; and that you've got the two very worst servants in London."

I bit my lips, then I set my teeth, I squeezed my hands so tightly that the nails went into the flesh, and hurt me ever so much; but it was of no use, I felt obliged to speak, and I did.

"They're as good as other people's servants," I said, sharply.

"Taste that toast," he said, grinning in the tantalizing way that he knows makes me angry.

"And I always go to the best registry offices," I said.

"Try that egg," he sneered.

"And if they are not quite perfect—"

"Have a piece of that leather bacon, my sweet," he said.

I could bear it no longer; and, with the paper blotted with tears, I wrote to Aunt Tatlock, telling her she could not come; and then I had a good long, comfortable cry; and wished my name was again Smealy.

That was, as you will understand, my maiden name before I was married to Mr. Chignal, and knew the meaning of the word servant; for I have no hesitation now in telling you, that these people that we hire with our money, feed with our bread, and who sleep beneath our roof—in feather beds, mind, for I don't hold with giving them only a hard mattress—have been the rocks upon which the ship of our happiness has been wrecked.

Mr. Chignal left the breakfast-room, and went up to his study, where he spends a great portion of his time, his chief study being the novels of the present day, and he reads one every twenty-four hours. He says he is going to write a work on novels and novelists, and that it is absolutely necessary that he should first become thoroughly acquainted with them; so he lies all day on the sofa, and reads and smokes.

I was just going to ring for the breakfast things to be cleared away, when his bell jingled so that I wonder it was not rung off, and Sarah went slowly to answer it, muttering the while.

I did not interfere, for I guessed what was the matter, and at the end of a minute I heard her come down.

"I never lived with sitch people!" I heard her exclaim; and she banged into the coal-cellars to fill a dust-pan with nubbly bits, then upon that she banged some paper, and I heard a piece of coal go down on the kitchen floor, and I'm sure she did not stop to pick it up. Then on the paper went a bundle of wood, and a box of matches; and I went to the door.

"Your master's fire out again, Sarah?" I said, inquiringly.

"Yes, mum; which it's always going out. There's something wrong with that chimney—the jester's broke, I think."

Before I could say more, Sarah was gone; but I followed, and before I was half-way up, crunch, crunch—there was I treading on small coal spilt by that dreadful girl all over our staircase Brussels at seven and sixpence per yard.

I sighed as I went on, and paused by the study door.

Yes, just as I expected—a whole bundle of wood crammed on, the coal shot after it, and then scratch, scratch, scratch, match after match, till the waste

made me shudder; and I went in, to find that dear Alfred was not there.

"For goodness' sake, Sarah, do be a little more economical with the matches."

"On'y 'apenny a box, mum!" said the girl, insolently. "They never said nothing about a match extra at my last place."

Sarah looked at me so cross that I shrank away; for, in confidence, I don't mind telling you that, only having been married one year, and being very young, I have not quite gained confidence enough to manage the servants as I could wish. I dare say I shall do it in time, but at present they seem sometimes to manage me.

We only keep two, and I am rather glad; for I find the place rather hard. If we had four, I'm afraid I should resign; but it has not come to that. Sarah is our maid of all-work, at least she is supposed to be, but she is not by any means all work; and Jane is the nursemaid, her duty being to attend to the baby, and do a portion of the housework. And no sooner had Mr. Chignal's fire been set going, the breakfast things cleared away, and the servants had their breakfast, than my troubles began.

The first thing was a quarrel in the kitchen about who was to do our bed-room, Sarah saying she was too busy, and wanted to clean her kitchen, and Jane declaring it was not her place.

That was got over by Jane giving way, and going up to do the bed-room, where I heard her sobbing and crying bitterly the whole time, and I sat trembling, for I knew what was coming, and it came.

About one o'clock, Jane came in, with a red nose and red eyes, and, with a sob between every four words, announced that she wished to leave.

"But you have only been here two months, Jane."

"No, mum; but it's two months too long. A hangel couldn't live along o' Sarah."

I talked, I argued, I pointed out the foolishness of her proceedings, especially as Sarah had only been with us a week, but it was of no use; and just then baby began to cry, and put an end to the discussion.

Dinner-time at last, and I was all of a fidget; for if there is any one thing Mr. Chignal is particular about, it is his dinner; and the annoying part of it is, that if things are not done just as he likes, the aggravating creature makes it an excuse for going off to his club.

As it happened, he was in a capital temper, and instead of grumbling at the sole because it was not brown, he nobly made fun of it, when you know I was in such a fidget because there was not a particle of bread crumb to be seen.

Then, too, the roast fowl was burnt to a cinder almost, and the potatoes as hard as iron; but dear Alfred only said they were cooked à l'Irlanaise, with a bone in the middle; and the peas were as gritty as cinder, and as he was so good I said so, and laughed about it.

"Grown in a sandy soil, my dear," he said, pleasantly; and I gave him such a sweet look, for the dinner was very badly cooked, I must own.

Alas! things were going on too happily to last; for I saw dear Alfred change colour when he ate a mouthful of the college pudding, and when at last

the Roquefort cheese, over which he was very particular, was placed upon the table, he grew cloudy.

"Well, you made a pretty good lunch off that cheese," he said, shortly.

"No, dear, I haven't touched it," I said, inadvertently; for if I had admitted the soft impeachment, there would have been no more said.

"Then that confounded woman's been at it!" he exclaimed.

"Don't you think, dear, it's shrunk a little with drying," I said, timidly.

"Shrunk be hanged!" he exclaimed, fiercely. "But hallo! What the deuce is that?"

He gave a most tremendous sniff, and I wasn't surprised, for I had smelt it before.

"Somebody's smoking!" he exclaimed.

"Perhaps it's the study door been left open, dear," I said.

"Pish! do I ever smoke horribly strong tobacco like that?"

He got up and rang the bell, when Sarah came.

"Are you smoking downstairs?" he said, sharply.

"Me a-smoking, sir?" said Sarah. "Lor, no, sir; I don't smoke."

"Then somebody else is," said dear Alfred.

"Please, sir, I don't know nothing about no one smoking down in my kidgin, but the chimney, and that smokes orrid, enough to make anybody ill."

She flounced out of the room, and no more was said; but the strong, choky, pungent odour, which is so different from dear Alfred's cigars, went off, and we went up into the little drawing-room, and prepared for tea.

For, though our income is very limited, we have our meals what I call nice—dining at seven, and taking tea at nine.

I had made the tea, and was just going to pour it out, when dear Alfred began to sniff again, and started up out of his chair.

"There's somebody smoking in the kitchen. Go and see—or, stop, I'll go."

"No, no, dear," I exclaimed, "let me go. The servants object to our going down amongst them."

He gave a short humph, and I went down, feeling sure that I heard a scuffling noise; but when I entered the kitchen, there was only Sarah there, and she looked at me as much as to say, "Well, ma'am, and what do you want?"

"Who has been smoking here, Sarah?"

"No one, ma'am," she said, stoutly.

"Come away from that coal-cellular door," I said. "Why are you standing there? Have you had any one here to-night?"

"'Strue as goodness, no, ma'am," she said, stoutly.

At this moment there came a loud crash from the cellar, and a noise like an avalanche of coals falling, which made me run towards the stairs.

"What's that, Sarah?" I said.

"The cat, I think, ma'am," she said.

And then the door gave a loud creak, and I ran to the stairs, shrieking for Alfred.

A YOUNG man at Kember's Bluff, Texas, acquired the habit of tossing a cocked pistol in the air, and catching it by the muzzle as it fell. The last time he caught it was just a moment before he died.

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER XXXVI.—THE RUINED RANCH.

MICKEY was, after all, certainly no coward; but he dropped his rifle, and set off running for a hundred yards before he could collect himself, when, giving himself a tremendous punch in the chest, he turned and ran back as fast as he had retreated, picked up his gun, and was about to step cautiously forward, when the noise was again heard a little to his left, and he perceived that it came from a denser part that he had passed in his descent.

"Sure, I won't be afraid," he said, proceeding cautiously; "and after all, I believe she's alone, poor darlin', and—oh, how mighty hoarse she is wid shouting."

He went on, emboldened by the silence, and thrusting the undergrowth aside he came at last upon a figure lying in the blackest part of the thicket prone upon its face.

Just as Mickey bent over it, the figure raised its head, and uttered one of the strange, resonant cries.

"Bad luck to ye, what d'ye mane by freckening a jintleman like that, ye black-looking baste?" cried Mickey, indignantly. "Who are ye, and what's the matter wid ye intirely?"

For answer, the figure started up, and tried to run off; but Mickey seized it by the collar, half dragged it into the light, and forced it upon its knees, revealing as he did so the face of Jerry Blackburn.

"Why—no—yes, it's Slocum's nigger," cried Mickey.

"Yes, sah, I Mass' Si Slocum's nigger, an—golly, it Mass' Mickey Doran from up de house. How you do, Mass' Mickey Doran, sah? I bery—oh, oh!"

Jerry threw up his chin, and howled again; for he had raised his hand to take Mickey's, but dropped it again with a keen expression of pain.

"Why, what's the matter, Jerry?"

"I 'bout kill, sah—I dying fass as fass."

"Let's look where you are hurt," said Mickey, kindly.

"Dah, sah," moaned Jerry, drawing the blue shirt from his arm, and showing it covered with blood. "I come out heah to die, sah. Rowdy ruffym 'tick um knife right froo um arm, an' I never get better again now."

"Well, bedad, an' I don't think you will," said Mickey.

"Oh, oh!" howled Jerry. "You fink not, Mass' Mickey Doran?"

"If you sit down there and howl, me boy, instead of tying up the places, and stopping the bleeding. Here, give me howlt!"

Jerry howled and flinched; but Mickey kept on, and with a kind of rough-and-ready surgery, securely bandaged the wounded arm, and said a few comforting words to the poor fellow.

"There, Jerry, you won't die now," said Mickey, by way of conclusion.

"You fink not, sah?"

"Sure of it," said Mickey. "You ought to have done this ever so long ago. How was it?"

"Why, you see, sah, I was out seeing to de big bull and de toder cows, when four or five rowdy cuss come and 'tack me. One 'tick his knife froo me like dis; and den I run, and dey shoot after me till I get right 'way farder an' farder—till I lie down out here, and fink I die."

"Well, let's get on," said Mickey; "for it seems as if I'm never to get to the ranch."

"You want go Mass' Si Slocum's ranch, sah?" said Jerry. "Well, sah, I show you de bess way, if dem rowdy ruffym gone 'way."

"Let me fetch the mule down first, me boy," said Mickey.

And panting up the ascent once more, he soon came back to Jerry with his wounded master.

"I tink I like ride on de mule too, only him no carry de two," said Jerry, faintly.

For the poor fellow was terribly hurt. The companionship of Mickey, however, brightened him up, and he made a great effort to be cheerful, and help to guard Mr. Townsend from injury, as they walked and slid down amongst the pines. He had, however, to stop at intervals to control his faintness, and each time he gave a rather piteous apologetic look at Mickey, as much as to say—

"I can't help it!"

They reached the foot of the gap in safety, and then, crossing the valley, soon reached the track.

The mule, which had for some time been rather sluggish, now pricked up its ears, and stepped out more freely, scenting civilization in the shape of corn and stabbing; but before they had gone far, Jerry stopped and fell, trembling.

"Oh, lor, Mass' Mickey Doran!" he exclaimed.

"Arrah, and what's the matter now?" said Mickey.

"Look, sah—look!—de ranch am burning! Dem ruffym have been dah, an' kill de boss, an' missus, an' Patsey, an—oh, lor! oh, lor! if dey hurt dat boy Freddie, dis chile go break um heart."

"Are you sure?" exclaimed Mickey, holding back the mule.

"Sure, 'sah? Oh, yes, I too sure. Look at de smoke come up dah, and—oh, golly, what great coward dis chile hab been to run away!"

"Bedad, man, but you were nearly killed first," said Mickey.

"So I was, sah—so I was; but I no ought run away an' leave de boss an' de missus and de booful child all to be kill an' burn up like dat, along wid Patsey."

"Howlt yer tongue, you niggur!" roared Mickey, whose whole being seemed changed at these words. "Here, take this six-shooter in your fist, and come on."

Night was now falling fast, and on taking a few steps farther a faint glimmer through the trees, and now and again a few flashes, showed but too plainly the truth of Jerry's words.

It was dangerous work to go on now, for the chances were that some of the crew who had burned the ranch might be encamped close at hand, the probability being that they were laden with plunder, and waiting for morning before taking their depar-

ture. But Mickey did not study this, he only held his piece ready; and after securing the mule to a bush, he went quietly on, closely followed by Jerry, and in a few minutes the two men stood before the glowing embers of what had been Si Slocum's dwelling, the wooden house being completely burned to the ground; but not a sign was to be seen of the desperadoes whose work this must have been.

Mickey looked around for danger, but there was none at hand; so, dropping his rifle butt upon the ground, he leaned his hands upon the muzzle, and asked himself whether it was all true, and that this heap of flaming ashes was all that remained of the happy home he had seen so few hours before.

"Dey all gone," said Jerry at last, after a hunt round.

"Gone, yes—gone," groaned Mickey. "But the missus, Jerry, and—and—Patsey. Heaven's curse and that of all the saints light on their heads who did this," he cried, savagely.

"I tink dey kill um all," said Jerry, "and put um in de house, an' set um alight. Oh lor! oh lor! what become of poor Jerry now?"

He sat down on the ground with his forehead resting on his knees for a few minutes, and rocked himself to and fro, while Mickey stood watching the dying flames.

"Let's go," said Mickey, at last, as their position flashed upon him, and the necessity for action occurred to him. "Let's fetch the masther in; the villins won't come back here now."

"Jerry wish dey would," cried the black, with his eyes blazing with fury. "I gib one or two 'nuff kill um right off."

"Let's fetch the masther here," groaned Mickey, whose animation seemed to die off as that of the black increased. "Where can we lay him?"

"Dey not burnt de mustang stable," said Jerry, pointing to the lean-to by the rocks. "Plenty straw dere. Come 'long, Mass' Mickey Doran; I 'gin forget all 'bout dis bad arm now."

He led the way; and in a few minutes Mr. Townsend's insensible form was brought to the stable, lifted from the mule, and carefully laid upon a thick bed of straw, while Jerry produced water and a couple of dry cakes from an opening in the thatch, which he seemed to have been in the habit of using for a cupboard.

This was partaken of with avidity, and then Mickey saw to his master's wounds, moistening his lips, and doing all that he could devise for the injured man's comfort, while Jerry said that the mule was well fed just outside.

"It's very glad I'd be to know what to do," said Mickey to himself, as he sat by his master's head. "How can I go away, and lave the poor craythur here, while I go to sake Miss Kate? And how will I find Masther Wallace's trail widout Si Slocum? Oh, it's a bad business ontirely, and I'd be glad to know what to do at all at all."

Then, as the thought of Patsey came upon him, he bent his head down, and the great tears ran between his fingers; for, in his simple, rough way, he loved the poor girl with all his heart.

Mickey thought of Wallace, and the help he needed, and at first it seemed to him that he could

do nothing; but at last he decided that he would leave Mr. Townsend in charge of Jerry, and would depart himself in search of Wallace, and with him do what he could to release Kate from the hands of her captors. He decided to go as soon as it was daybreak, and lay down on the straw to rest himself, so as to be fresher at starting.

"If we don't save the poor girl," he said, bitterly, "I can only get killed; and I don't seem to care a bit now at all at all whether I live or die."

Poor Mickey! He did not mean to sleep; but somehow Nature was too strong for him. The labour he had gone through had been most exhausting, and he was just dozing when a peculiar, loud noise was heard, which made him start to his elbow.

"Ah, well," he muttered, "I mustn't blame the poor fellow—he's slapy, same as I am, and he did wake me up."

For Jerry was snoring in the most outrageous manner, curled up just at Mickey's feet.

Mickey altered his position, and sitting up with his back against the rock he made up his mind to wait until daybreak.

He had hardly settled himself in his new position when he was startled by hearing a strange noise, as of some beast snuffing and moving the straw.

"Bears, by the howly!" muttered Mickey.

And he strained his eyes in the direction of the sound; but it was pitchy dark where they were, and he could make out nothing; so, stretching out his hand, he grasped his rifle, ready to use it should there be any necessity for the action, and then waited.

Whatever the beast might be, it was evidently very active, and a cold sweat broke out all over him as he heard it coming nearer and nearer.

"It'll be for ating me," he muttered.

And drawing the gun towards him, he made a rustling noise with the stock amongst the straw, which set his mind at rest as to the quality of the animal, though it made his position very little more comfortable.

For at the first motion there was an angry snarl, a deep growl, and then a loud, baying bark of a great dog, which awoke Jerry.

The latter started up.

"Hey? What, de debble! Hallo, Jack, ole boss," he cried, and there was the sound of whining and the capering of the dog, followed by angry snarls and barks.

"What, boss, you smell somebody dah? Dat's Mass' Mickey Doran and Mass' Townsend. Dem's tickler friend of dis chile, an' you gwine say how do? Take you paw."

The dog came rustling through the straw to Mickey, placed a paw on each of his shoulders, raised himself up, and favoured him with a lick or two on the face, running off directly to where Mr. Townsend lay, and, sniffing about, ending by throwing up his head and giving a loud, whining howl.

"Um smell de blood, Mass' Mickey Doran, sah," exclaimed Jerry. "But I berry glad, sah. Mass' Jack here fight like de debble when he got him monkey up, an' I berry sorry for anybody when he 'tik um teeef in um. Jack no leab go again—eh, Jack, ole boss?"

Jack whined and snuffled, and uttered several low, short barks in quick succession.

"Eh? what you say, Jack? You want to go 'way 'gain? No—you 'top 'long me, sah."

The dog barked again impatiently.

"What's the matter with the craythur?" said Mickey.

"He say, sah, he want bose ob us go 'long wid him, 'an he show us somefin."

Mickey jumped up, and as Jerry imitated his example in a more cumbersome manner, the dog bounded out into the opening, and uttered several low, sharp barks.

"It all right, sah; he show de way. Come 'long," said Jerry. "Dah, I know. Golly, I tink Jack know whar dat chile Freddie go hide hisself, and he take us dere. Hey, Jack! Freddie."

The dog barked again, and made a dash for the forest, pausing to see if he was followed, running back whining, and then starting off again.

"Bedad, I belave you're right," said Mickey; "but how'll we see our way in the dark?"

"Jack show de way," said Jerry. "I follow Jack; and you, sah, you keep juss 'hind me. Go 'long, Jack, ole boss, we coming."

The dog barked again, and hurried on, running a few steps, and then, to make sure that he was followed, turning round.

It was hard work to follow him through the darkness; but Jerry was so well acquainted with the ground that he helped Mickey, and together they cautiously made their way through the wood, with their arms ready, expecting at every moment to meet with danger, though they knew that the dog would give them ample warning.

No danger, however, rose up to encounter them; and after journeying on for nearly an hour in this way, Mickey, whose shins were getting terribly bruised by the stones over which he stumbled, paused to draw breath; when the dog, who had dashed on right ahead, suddenly uttered a low, peculiar whine.

CHAPTER XXXVII.—THE TIGER'S LEAP.

RUTH SLOCUM needed all her strength of mind in the weary hours which followed, for they had to keep watch for the danger that she knew was hovering about; but at last all seemed so peaceful that they made a hasty breakfast, and, at Jerry's earnest wish, she let him go out of their little fortification to let loose the cattle.

"Dey all 'tarve to deaf," Jerry had said. "Dey not got no water an' no nuffum."

"Keep a sharp look-out, then, Jerry, and make haste back. Set the poor beasts loose, and lose no time."

Jerry ran off in high glee, for he had quite an affection for the cattle in his charge; and, making for the place where they were folded, he set them at liberty, to watch them with delight as, with tails erect, they went off at a clumsy gallop for the creek, where the bright, clear water ran, and, after quenching their thirst, were soon knee-deep in tiger grass.

"Spec' I like de ole bull well as anyfing," said Jerry to himself. "He nebber 'fraid ob de butcher, 'cos he tough as ole tree—hyah! hyah! I reckon

de bull 'bout de bess life dere is. He nebber do no work, only eat, drink, an' sleep long as um like. I like de ole—yah!"

Jerry tried to run, but he was surrounded by a party of Vasquez's men.

"Here, hold hard, nigger, we want—"

Jerry paused for no more; but, with an agility for which he could not have been given credit, he made a dash for the mountain.

Several shots were sent after him, but not one of them took effect; and he would have got off scot-free had not Coyote Tobe risen up, as it were, just in his path, and, as the black made a bound, driven his knife right through the poor fellow's arm.

Poor Jerry was forced by the appearance of this enemy to alter his course. He had been making for the ranch to help his mistress, but the pain of the wound, the deathly sickness which followed, and the horror that oppressed him, made him stagger down into the ravine, where Coyote Tobe did not care to follow him, and from thence into the pine tree gap, where he was found by Mickey, as we have seen.

Before half an hour had elapsed, Ruth, who had been warned by the firing of the coming danger, saw the peril in which she was placed, for the ruffians in great force came up, and, seeing her at one of the loopholes, called upon her to open the door and come out.

The answer was from little Freddie's rifle—a shot placing one man *hors de combat*.

"Curse them! Break the door in," shouted Tobe.

Three men ran to a piece of rock, lifted it, and bore it towards the house; but before they were half-way one fell to a shot from Ruth's rifle, the rock fell, crushing the foot of a second, and the other was retreating when he, too, fell—for Ruth had caught up a second rifle and fired.

He was only slightly wounded, though; and, maddened by his pain, he turned, caught up a fresh mass of stone, ran with it to the door, and with one blow drove it from its rough hinges.

With a cry of savage delight, the ruffians rushed in, and before poor Ruth could make any further defence, she was pinioned, and dragged out into the opening.

Shouts and firing were heard at the same moment, and one of Ruth's captors fell to a shot from Si Slocum's revolver, as he now appeared upon the scene, chased by Vasquez himself, and four others of his party.

A sharp conflict ensued, as Si, seeing his wife's danger, dashed to her help, bringing down two more enemies with his revolver before he was literally beaten down by force of numbers, and then pinioned with Ruth, back to back, to the tree in front of their door.

"At last, friend Si Slocum," said Vasquez, twirling his moustache, as, with a malignant grin upon his countenance, he seated himself on a rough block. "I think we shall be even now."

"You cowardly scoundrel!" roared Si, who was beside himself with rage. "This is manly, is it not? Twenty to one, I guess."

"Don't be perky, friend Si," laughed Vasquez. "But there, you may if you like; for I'm in so good

a humour with my good luck that I can listen to anything."

"Coward, to come upon us like this!" panted Si, trying to loosen himself from his bonds. "And to bind a woman, too."

"Yes. Such women as your wife are dangerous, friend Si. But let me tell you how fortunate I have been, friend Si Slocum," continued Vasquez, smiling the while he rolled up and lit a cigarette. "I've got the fair little Kate Townsend safe over yonder, and now I've got you. The one for pleasure, the other for revenge."

Si did not answer, for he felt appalled; and Vasquez sat smoking calmly.

"I am thinking what I shall do to you, master Si," he continued. "I'm thinking that as I have so long an account against you, and as it's my turn now—mine—the turn of Vasquez, whom you and your cursed wife robbed of his fair intended, and of wealth and happiness—I may as well—let me see—there, I won't be hard upon you, Si; I'm master now, so I don't think I shall punish you, though I might blow your brains out."

He played with a revolver as he spoke, and directed the muzzle at Si's head; but the latter did not flinch.

"You're a plucky fellow, Si," laughed Vasquez. "I wish you were one of my band. By the way, where's that small spawn of his? We'll take him, and train him up. He was there, I suppose?"

"Yes," said half a dozen, "he shot one of the men."

"Find him," said Vasquez, laconically.

Easier said than done. The men searched in every direction, while the father and mother looked on, trembling, to the great delight of Vasquez, whose dark eyes watched and seemed to read their very souls.

"Never mind," said Vasquez, coolly lighting a fresh cigarette; "he'll starve to death, or be eaten by the bears; it don't matter which. And now, boys, here's this scoundrel who has spent his life in thwarting me; what shall we do to him?"

"Shoot him," was the reply.

"No, no," said Vasquez, "that would be cruel. We'll have his wife up at the haunt, eh?"

"Yes," chorused several.

And a laugh went round.

"Vasquez," said Si, hoarsely, "I've injured you, I dare say, but she has never done you harm. There, you have me in your power; do as you will. Kill me if you like, but let her go to the gulch in safety."

"My dear Slocum, most honest and modest of men, do you think I'm a murderer? Oh, dear, no; we shall take the greatest care of the lady, and teach her to drink and be jovial; as for you, we won't harm a hair of your head."

"Vasquez, are you a fiend?" gasped Si, as he strove to loosen his bonds once more.

"Oh, dear, no," said Vasquez, smiling; "I am quite an angel. Some men would have shot you without mercy. As for me, I am all that's generous. I think you are a bad man; and I shall only take this charming wife of yours away, and give her to my men, who will treat her far better than you did."

"Si," whispered Ruth, "can you get loose? Better to die fighting."

He knew it was, but he was powerless, and Vasquez went on—

"As for you—as I said before—I shall not hurt a hair of your head. When we have taken all that is worth having at the ranch, my boys here will tie you up hand and foot, and put you in your own sitting-room. They will then shut you up, and leave you."

"But, Vasquez—my wife—my poor wife!" groaned Si.

"I told you: we shall take her away; and as for you—why, you will be happy enough. You'll soon forget her, for I'm sure my boys here will set fire to the ranch when they go, when there will be a dish of hot roast Slocum for the bears, as soon as the ruins cool."

A coarse burst of laughter met Si Slocum's ears as these words were spoken, and he now, for the first time, comprehended the diabolical nature of the man.

"You see, I hate you," said Vasquez, "even as I once hated your father, and—loved your mother. Ah, do you understand that allusion, friend Si? Well, I am the man who killed your father when you were a child, and now heaven forbid that I should injure the son, who has always been like a viper in my path. The flames will do that."

Si felt that it would be useless to appeal to man or demon, while his heart throbbed as he now realized why he had always had so great a repugnance to Vasquez. Here, then, was the wretch who had blasted his home, and now that he was face to face with him he was powerless.

"Stop!" cried Vasquez, smiling. "An idea. Boys, you know what a kind and generous man I am. Well, look here, I am so satisfied with my good fortune in securing beautiful little Kate, your future queen, that I mean to let Si Slocum go scot-free."

There was a murmur hereat, especially from the wounded men, while others glanced at the one who lay dead.

"Don't growl, lads," said Vasquez. "Even though we steal and kill, we must do a good action sometimes; and I shall do as I like, and perform one now. Si Slocum, I shall set you free, and your wife shall stay with you unharmed."

"Do you mean this, Vasquez?" exclaimed Si, panting; while Ruth, who was pale as death, stared at their enemy with dilated eyes.

"Yes," said Vasquez, "I mean it; but upon one condition."

Si's heart sank, and Ruth closed her eyes.

"Look here, boys," said Vasquez, smiling pleasantly. "Si Slocum is a wonderful shot, and I want to see his prowess. So look here, friend Si. I shall place your wife fifty paces off, with an apple upon her head. You shall have your rifle, and if you split that apple with a bullet, you are both free. If you kill your wife, why you will be her murderer, and we shall hang you upon this very tree."

He pointed to the green foliage above their heads, and as the scene seemed to swim round Si Slocum's head, a low voice whispered to him—

"Try, dear love, try. Better shoot me than that I should become these wretches' prey."

Going Down to Brown's.

IT isn't so very long ago since Smith proposed to me that we should go down and see Brown. It was over a pipe, after we had been comparing notes about fishing, and showing our tackle.

"Let's go," he said, "for a week — shake off old, musty London, and go in for bees, buttercups, green fields, sunshine, shadow, bathing, beauty —"

"And bosh," I said, grumpily.

"Nonsense, man. I had a letter from Brown only the other day. He's got a boat and a little tent, and he goes off on trips down the old River Wumble. It's a sort of disused canal, you know, chawed up by the railroad; and the fishing in it is simply superb."

"It's so horribly dull," I remonstrated.

"Dull?—nonsense! Tell you what, we'll take little Tommy Robinson with us. First-rate little chap — no end of fun."

"And spoil all the fishing," I said.

"He'd better not, or we'll pitch him in," was the reply.

And the consequence was that we wrote to Brown, saying we were coming in about a fortnight. He wrote back, saying he was very glad; and the end of it was, we ran down by rail to Dorbury, in the Midlands, a sleepy old place, where Brown had settled down as a solicitor; while we three, his old friends, had remained in London to become barristers.

"By Jove, how snug this is after that dingy old Gray's-inn," I said.

And I glanced enviously round his pleasant bachelor home.

"Not so bad, is it?" he said, with a certain amount of pride in his manner. "But about our doings, my boy. I didn't write to consult you, because I thought you'd all trust me; but I tell you what—the weather's delicious, so I've made arrangements for us to go down to the island to picnic it."

"How do you mean?" I said.

"Row down there, along the old river, and stop on the island for days—cook our own grub, bathe in the river, smoke, fish, lie on our backs; days when we went gipsying, and that sort of thing."

"And come home to sleep?"

"Nonsense, sleep in the tent like men—that's the beauty of it."

"How about rheumatics?"

"Drat them rheumatics!" as the song says. There, you timid old woman, I've had the tent set up, and it's waterproof; and there's a sheet laid down, and it's waterproof too; so you won't hurt. But there, you fellows said you'd come down, and left the fishing arrangements to me; so you must abide by them."

We all agreed, and Brown went on to tell us about his preparations.

"I've got a bucket of brandlings and red worms, well scoured in damp moss," he deliberately responded, in those slow accents in which a man expounds to you the details of a forthcoming banquet; "and I've had a couple of nests dug out, with any amount of grub in 'em; and, if that don't do, we've lots of paste and gentles from old Tamplin's pit, and—"

here his voice sank to a rich, melodious whisper—"Wilkins—you remember old Wilkins? He's my tenant now—has been ground-baiting the place for a week with clay and grains, and a couple of dead cats in a hamper hung up in the trees."

I knew then what was in store for us, and my sole answer was an intelligent look of gratitude.

The River Wumble is very like all other canals. It is an ugly, dirty piece of water, running under ugly, red-bricked bridges, fringed with stumpy pollard willows; and here and there, in nooks and corners, covered with the kidney-shaped leaves of the white and yellow water-lily. It is, in short, just such another canal as that which haunts the traveller by the Great Western for the first twenty miles out of Paddington; but it has this one recommendation—it is positively alive with fish. There is one difference, however. The engineer who formed our canal made it as much as possible out of the materials of the old river. Whenever the old river ran tolerably straight and deep, he retained it; but whenever it tumbled, and twisted, and doubled about, he cut long straight pieces such as have been above described.

The old pieces, however, were beautiful in places, widening out, and often divided by islands, such as the one we were to seek.

We learned all this from Brown, who gave us also to understand that the good people of the neighbourhood were fly-fishers to a man, and consequently look down upon bottom-fishing as a species of poaching, fit only for a little boy or a crossing-sweeper, or a chimney-sweep out of employment. Nor is this all; for although there are plenty of fish in the canal, their flesh is apt to have a muddy flavour, very different from that of the exquisite trout that in fitting weather are to be whipped out of the stream. Traffic on the canal is scanty, and the bargemen, although they occasionally lay night-lines for eels, are altogether ignorant of the use of drag or casting net, being bargemen of a rural and comparatively unsophisticated type, and no more to be compared with their brethren of the Lea and the other London river reaches than is an old-fashioned country solicitor to a young go-ahead practitioner out of Chancery-lane.

The consequence is that the place simply swarms with perch and rudd, which never run to any great size, although they can be pulled up almost as fast as minnows.

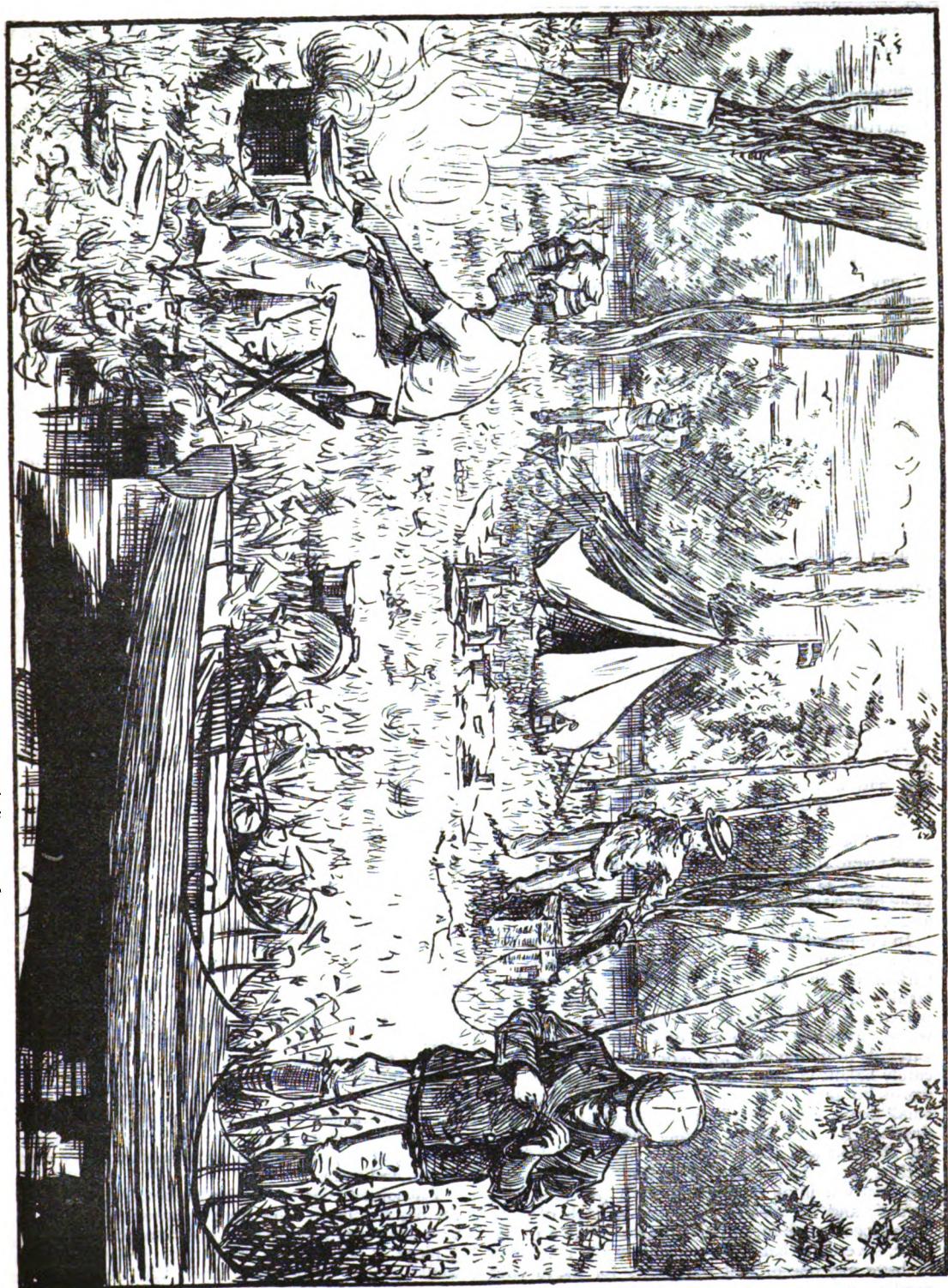
If, however, the perch and rudd are small, the eels and carp—for there are carp in the water—attain dimensions something more than respectable; and, after all, if we are to take bottom-fishing as it is, it matters very little what you catch, so long as you get your fair share of excitement out of the work.

That evening we went down to the canal bank, got into our host's boat, and, stripping off our coats, went in for a comfortable row down for about half a dozen miles from the town.

"How about the grog, though?" said little Robinson.

"You'll find it all there," said Brown.

And away we went cheerily, to get to the island in the evening glow, where Wilkins was waiting for



OUR CAMP.—(See "Going Down to Brown's," page 206).

us, and the white sides of the tent could be seen through the trees.

This part of the river was very pretty; trees were plentiful, there was plenty of long grass, and as to the surroundings, we might, for the solitude, have been right away in the backwoods of America.

The island had its edge fringed with low pollards overhanging the water, the grub and caterpillar dropping from which are in themselves a perpetual ground bait. Other precautions, however, had been taken. For the last fortnight a steady shower of lively gentles had been rained from the baskets containing the deceased tabbies, while gigantic pellets of clay had been thrown in by the dozen, together with bruised apples and soaked oats, to tempt up the carp.

"I shall be cook," said little Robinson; "anybody may fish."

And he dressed immediately, retaining his costume to the end of our trip.

I should have said undressed; for Tommy took off everything but his flannel shirt and vest, and put on a scarlet bargee's cap, in which he looked supremely happy, especially when seated on a folding seat before our charcoal fire, cooking eels in a little frying-pan.

Smith, all through our stay, seemed to devote himself exclusively to the care of the hamper—a square, flat-topped hamper—which was full to repletion.

As for Brown, he seemed to pass the greater part of his time in having what he called "a good wash." He must have been a very dirty man in imagination, for he was always scrubbing himself, by a basin placed upon a little folding seat.

As for me, I fished—fished constantly; and I hope I have the forgiveness of all the fish I killed.

We slept very soundly that night in our tent. The ground was hard, and Brown kicked, while Robinson had a nasty habit of gurgling; but it disturbed me little, and we were up betimes and at work.

Wilkins was an old fisherman, and the arrangements were absolutely perfect. A comfortable Windsor chair was placed for me on the turf, with a little table by the side of it for bait, tackle, tobacco, lights, and other comforts.

In the margin of the bank, stretching out over the stream at an angle of forty-five degrees from the surface of the water, were four forks or crutches, fashioned out of old bean-sticks, each of which supported a rod. One of these, baited with a large lob-worm, was intended for the eels; the second, very carefully prepared with fine hair tackle, a large, delicately balanced float, and a small, tough, lively red worm, lay in wait for the carp. The other two had small floats, were baited with wasp grub, and were destined to work havoc among the rudd. Lastly, my fifth rod was short, stout and strong, and fitted with a capitally baited and equipped paternoster. My host was in all respects similarly provided with myself; and we were as comfortable, each of us in his respective chair, as any Thames angler in his punt, save only that we were far too old fishermen to have any one to bait our hooks for us, to offer needless advice, or to interrupt that free current of

old memories which always runs when men who have been boys at school together meet alone.

Neither Smith nor Robinson would fish; for they said there was a pound canister of tobacco that must be smoked, and they set to work to smoke it. The weather was magnificent; the smell of hay was in all the air, the birds were singing, the sky was cloudless; and there was a dim, pleasant murmur of bees, and rustling leaves, and the rattling wings of the dragon-fly, and the low cry of the wood-pigeon, and a hundred other soft, uncertain sounds—all blended into one great, sweet, harmonious diapason. So we lit our pipes, and commenced our sport.

Before five minutes were over, I had caught a couple of perch—not large, but quite lively enough to give as much sport as that afforded by the dace and pope off Hampton Court. No sooner had I rebaited my paternoster than a rudd took my first wasp grub; and while I was bringing him to bank, another rudd indulged in fatal liberties with the second.

While I was unhooking the fourth fish, an unmistakable, slow, heavy strain on another line told me that an eel had pouched my lob-worm. I brought him to bank, and judged him, as nearly as I could tell at the minute, to be about a quarter of a pound. I got my hook up out of his throat with a disgorger, and the way in which he had "gone for" the lob-worm satisfied me at once that he was on the feed, and that I should have more of his fellows before the day was over. I put a fresh lob-worm on my hook, and had then immediately to pull up another perch.

I had fished in such places before as a boy; but then boys are ignorant of the grand mystery of ground bait, and have no notion what can be done in a canal if your ground bait is lavishly used, and you fish three or four rods at once.

For the first half-hour, my old schoolfellow and I kept count each against the other; but before long the current of our thoughts received a sudden check. My largest float moved very slightly, but in an ominous manner. Presently it sank, slowly and deliberately, for about a quarter of an inch, and slowly and deliberately rose to the surface again. No need to tell either of us what that meant. For a few seconds we watch with eager eyes; the float quivers once again; there is one little turn of the wrist, and the point of my rod gives in a way that tells beyond doubt or question of a "whopper."

I will not indulge in an angling idyll on the joys of playing a carp with a hair. Suffice it to say that when I brought that carp to bank—which I did at last with the aid of a landing net—he turned four pounds and a quarter. We had not yet been fishing an hour, and before ninety minutes were over we had two more carp, one to each rod, to say nothing of any amount of such smaller fry as eels, perch, and rudd.

I absolutely decline to give the total by weight of the day's catch, for the simple reason that nobody who does not know what can be sometimes done in a piece of still, muddy water that is never fished, would dream of believing me. We caught more perch and rudd than we could carry; we had be-

tween us more than twenty pounds of very decent eels; and we got in all eleven fine carp, the biggest of which turned five pounds in the scale, and was as hoary with age as he was slimy with canal mud.

By the time that evening settled in, and the swallows began to settle in the sedge, and the cattle to congregate in the fields, and the twitter of the bat to vibrate in the air, we had made between us a catch which the best Maidenhead fisherman might well envy us.

Wilkins was sent back in the boat for materials and a saucepan, for Robinson declared he knew what to do, and stewed those carp in port wine, making such a mess that no one could eat them. We spitchcocked some of the eels, and tried others *en matelote*; while next day we actually got out of the perch and the rudd a very decent imitation of a *bouilli-baisse*, which, if not quite worthy of the *Trois Frères*, was not such a bad dish on a picnic like ours.

Ah, what a time we had, and what pipes we smoked, and what tales we told! Wilkins went to and fro in the boat for all we wanted, and somehow turned up every day about dinner-time with a great covered dish of hot mashed potatoes, which he said his missus had prepared.

We had three days of that glorious tent-work—four happy bachelors and Wilkins, who took a holiday away from his "missus," so that we were free from the annoyances of the domineering sex. But at last the rain came down in torrents, and we one and all declared that this was notice to quit; and we quitted, getting back to Brown's house at Dorking exceedingly wet.

Wilkins did the cleaning up. And now a word to fishermen. Never despise a piece of water because it is ugly and muddy, and nobody fishes in it. If nobody fishes there, it is all the more likely that you will pull something out. There is hardly a canal in England but will yield good sport, if you will only take the trouble and go to the slight expense involved in ground-baiting it properly. Ground-baiting simply means advertising; and fish are like other creatures: if you want to catch them you must advertise. I would add that I am not at all ashamed of catching perch and rudd with five rods at work at once. A perch of a quarter of a pound is quite as respectable a fish to catch as a Thames gudgeon; and if at Sunbury I may have two ledgers out at once for barbel, I do not see why, on so out-of-the-way a piece of water as the Wumble River, I should not have a dozen rods out at once, if only I could attend to them all.

At a certain meeting of the clergy in Yorkshire there were present a Rev. Mr. Buckle and Rev. Sydney Smith. The latter, observing that when Mr. Buckle's "health" was given he never spoke, remarked that he was a "Buckle without a tongue." All laughed excepting Mr. Buckle himself, who sat unmoved. At last, after a quarter of an hour, he woke up from his reverie, exclaiming, "Oh, I see now, Mr. Smith; you meant a joke, sir!" upon which he laughed so heartily that they thought he would choke, and a friend had to pat him on the back.

Japanese Wrestlers.

THE arrangement of the inside of the amphitheatre was very much like that of a circus at home.

Round the outer circle were seats raised in tiers one above the other. Below this was an inner circle—the pit, in fact—with one side kept clear for the wrestlers to dress and undress, sponge themselves between each round, &c.; while in the centre of all was a raised mound of earth, on the top of which was a round space, some fifteen feet across, where the wrestling took place.

As they entered, two burly fellows had just stepped into the arena, and were walking round—each with the swagger of a cock on his own dunghill—stretching their arms and legs, and showing their muscle to an admiring and applauding crowd, who, with eager, excited faces, were backing their fancy, and shouting as loudly and determinedly as the ring men on a Derby Day.

They were very tall for Japanese—one of the two being fully six feet in height, and enormously fat, but sadly deficient in thoroughly real hard muscle.

Stripped to a cloth twisted round their waists, you could see plainly the masses of blubber that hung loosely about them. This is to be accounted for by the fact that weight is the greatest possible desideratum in their principles of wrestling, inasmuch as being pushed out of the ring counts as a fall; and, in consequence of the space being so narrow, as a rule not more than one tussle out of every three produces a fair back-fall.

Having swelled about to their satisfaction, each took a pinch of salt from a cup handed to him, received a final sponging from his attendant, and then proceeded to "challenge."

This consisted in placing a hand on each thigh, just above the knee; then, stooping slightly, lifting each leg in turn, at the same time raising the hand, and replacing it with a loud smack, as the foot came sharply to the ground.

In this way they went on, slowly and deliberately, in front of each other for about a minute. Then, keeping their hands still on their thighs, they squatted on their heels, face to face, and about a foot apart.

Standing just outside the ring was the umpire, who also acted the part of herald, proclaiming in a loud voice, as each pair of combatants appeared, their names, place of birth and residence, previous performances, &c. He was a rather showily dressed individual, and carried a rod in his hand, with which to signal to those engaged to stop or go on, or to pronounce a fall.

The men are supposed to begin by mutual agreement; and if the umpire considers that they have started with an equal chance, he signs to them to continue; if not, he stops them, and they resume their position.

The match that our friends were about to witness was evidently one which excited much more interest than common. The two wrestlers were the champions of their respective districts; and, as both were strongly represented among the spectators, the house seemed to divide itself into two parties, and the betting was spirited in the extreme.

After gazing on each other for some time, one of them springs up; but, having anticipated his adversary, the umpire's wand interposes, and they both rise to walk round the ring, refresh themselves with another pinch of salt, rinse their mouths out with water, and go through the challenging process as before.

These false starts, with the subsequent swaggering, are gone through two or three times, until it becomes rather wearisome. But at length they make up their minds to business, and buckle to in earnest, giving forth short, quick shouts as they struggle for a grip. The chief aim of each, though, in addition to obtaining and preventing a hold, is to push the other beyond the confines of the circle; and they shove and butt at each other for some time before getting together. At last they are locked in a close grasp, and as they sway backwards and forwards, round and round, the party spirit becomes uproarious, and the pit shout lustily to their champions.

For a time it looks as if the bigger man will force the other down by sheer weight and strength; and at one moment he has all but got him in his power, when, with a quick effort, the latter releases himself, throws his weight in with a sudden push, and his adversary's foot goes beyond the ring.

The unexpected turn in the tide of battle is received with the most enthusiastic applause from his party, though the foreigners would naturally have preferred to see the fall fairly contested according to their own received ideas of wrestling.

Some time is consumed in preparing for the next bout; but when both are ready, after the preliminary "challenge," they settle down almost immediately to their work, and quickly getting a mutual grip, a good struggle results in the larger man "grassing" his former conqueror with a fair cross-buttock, amid the encouraging cheers of his friends, who back him with renewed confidence.

The other gets up smiling, and his admirers are no less sanguine of success.

The third being the deciding fall, they take even longer than before in their preparations, and it is not until the second call to time by the umpire that they again take their places in the arena.

The excitement is now tremendous, and it seems as if, whichever man is victorious, the whole affair will end in a free fight.

The party feeling is almost contagious, and the members of the group of foreigners are backing their opinion freely among themselves. Bobby, as is but right, puts his five dollars on the smaller champion; and, to judge by appearances, the chances are slightly in his favour, for the other is blowing rather heavily.

This time they observe the greatest caution in opening the ball; and it is not until after two false attempts that they are up together, and the umpire bids them "Go on."

Their blood is now thoroughly up, and they close at once without shouting, for neither can afford to lose any breath. Twisting and writhing, they struggle from side to side—first one obtaining a momentary advantage, then the other. Now the taller one all but succeeds in repeating the cross-buttock of the previous round; now, in his turn, he is all but tripped off his

legs; and now, without relaxing their grasp, they stand motionless for some seconds.

The heavy weight, though, is too fat to last, and each effort blows him more and more; till his wirier antagonist, getting a good under-grip, doubles him over his leg, and the giant staggers and falls—the other on the top of him.

At this juncture it seems as if one-half of the assembled multitude had gone mad. Yelling, dancing, and singing, they testify their joy in the wildest conceivable way. Scores of coats, *obis* (the long silk girdle that the Japanese of both sexes wind round their waists), and shoes are cast in to the conqueror—one man actually stripping himself to his waistcloth to swell the list of gifts.

The victorious hero himself seems intoxicated with his success, struts about the ring, "challenging" fiercely an imaginary adversary, slapping his thighs, arms, and breasts, and behaving altogether like the barn-door warrior before alluded to when he returns triumphant from the fray.—*From our Life in Japan.*

A Strange Romance.

THE following curious story is taken from the *Cambridge Journal* of October, 1752:—

"Perhaps you have heard that a chest was seized by the Custom House officers, which was landed near this place about a fortnight ago; they took it for smuggled goods, though the person with it produced the King of France's signature to Mr. Williams, as a Hamburg merchant. But people, not satisfied with the account Mr. Williams gave, opened the chest, and one of them was going to run his hanger in, when the person to whom it belonged clapt his hand upon his sword, and desired him to desist (in French), for it was the corpse of his dear wife. Not content with this, the officers plucked off the embalming, and found it as he had said. The man, who appeared to be a person of consequence, was in the utmost agonies, while they made a spectacle of the lady. They sat her in the high church, where anybody might come and look on her, and would not suffer him to bury her, till he gave a further account of himself.

"There were other chests of fine clothes, jewels, &c., belonging to the deceased. He acknowledged at last that he was a person of quality, that his name was not Williams, that he was born at Florence, and the lady was a native of England, whom he married, and she desired to be buried in Essex; that he had brought her from Verona, in Italy, to France, by land, there hired a vessel to Dover, discharged the vessel there, and took another for Harwich, but was drove hither by contrary winds.

"This account was not enough to satisfy the people; he must tell her name and condition, in order to clear himself of a suspicion of murder. He was continually in tears, and had a key of the vestry, where he sat every day with the corpse. My brother went to see him there, and the scene so shocked him he could hardly bear it; he said it was so like Romeo and Juliet.

"He was much pleased with my brother, as he talked both Latin and French, and, to his great surprise, told him who the lady was, which proving to be a person he knew, he could not help uncovering

the face. In short, the gentleman confessed he was the Earl of Roseberry's son (the name is Primrose), and his title Lord Delamere [Dalmeny]; that he was born and educated in Italy, and never was in England till two or three years ago, when he came to London, and was in company with this lady, with whom he fell passionately in love, and prevailed on her to quit the kingdom and marry him; that, having bad health, he had travelled with her all over Europe; and when she was dying she asked for pen and paper, and wrote, 'I am the wife of the Rev. Mr. G—, rector of Th—, in Essex; my maiden name was C. Cannom, and my last request is to be buried at Th—.'

"The poor gentleman who last married her protests he never knew (till this confession on her death-bed) that she was another's wife; but in compliance with her desire he brought her over, and should have buried her at Th—, if the corpse had not been stopped, without making any stir about it.

"After the nobleman had made this confession, they sent to Mr. G—, who put himself in a passion, and threatened to run her last husband through the body. However, he was prevailed on to be calm. It was represented to him that this gentleman had been at great expense and trouble to fulfil her desire; and Mr. G— consented to see him. They say the meeting was very moving, and that they addressed each other civilly. The stranger protested his affection to the lady was so strong, that it was his earnest wish not only to attend her to the grave, but to be shut up for ever with her there.

"Nothing in romance ever came up to the passion of this man. He had a very fine coffin made for her, with six large silver plates over it, and at last was very loth to part with her to have her buried. He put himself in the most solemn mourning, and on Sunday last, in a coach, attended the corpse to Th—, where Mr. G— met it, in solemn mourning likewise.

"The Florentine is a genteel person of a man, seems about twenty-five years of age, and, they say, a sensible man; but there was never anything like his behaviour to his dear, dear wife, for so he would call her to the last. Mr. G— attended him to London yesterday, and they were very civil to each other; but my lord is inconsolable. He says he must fly England, which he can never see more. I have heard this account from many hands, and can assure you it is fact. Kitty Cannom is, I believe, the first woman in England that had two husbands attend her to the grave together. You may remember her, to be sure; her life would appear more romantic than a novel."

The Bells of Little Shandon.

M R. JOSKINS selected a residence at Little Shandon because it was such a quiet locality. It is a rural kind of neighbourhood, and all of Mr. Joskins's neighbours keep cows.

Every cow wears a bell.

Each neighbour has selected a cow-bell of a different key and tone from any of the others, in order that he may know the cow of his heart from the other kine of the district.

So that Mr. Joskins's nights are filled with music, and he has learned so exactly the tones of every

bell, and the habits of each corresponding cow, that the voices of the night are not an unintelligible jargon to him.

It makes it much easier for Mr. Joskins, who is a nervous man, than if he had to listen, and conjecture, and wonder until he was fairly wild.

As it is, when the first sweet moments of his slumber are broken by a solemn, ponderous, resonant "Ka-lum, ka-lum, ka-lum!" Mr. Joskins knows that the Widow Barberry's old crumple-horn is going down the street, looking for an open front gate; and his knowledge is confirmed by a doleful "Ka-lum, pu-lum!" that occurs at regular intervals, as old Crumple pauses to try each gate as she passes it; for she knows that appearances are deceitful, and that a boy can shut a front gate in such a way as to deceive his father, and yet leave the catch unfastened.

Then, when Mr. Joskins is called up from his second doze by a lively serenade of "To-link, to-lank, lank, lankle-inkle, lankle-inkle, tekinlienkle-link, kink, kink!" he knows that Mr. Throop's young brindle is in Throstlewaite's garden, and that Throstlewaite is sailing round after her in a pair of slippers and a nightshirt.

And by sitting up in bed Mr. Joskins can hear the things that Mr. Throstlewaite is throwing strike against the side of the house—thud! spat! bang! And the character of the noises tells him whether the inside was a clod, a piece of board, or a brick.

And when the wind down the street is fair, it brings with it faint echoes of Mr. Throstlewaite's remarks.

Then, when the final crash and tinkle announce that the cow has bulged through the front fence and got away, and Mr. Joskins turns over to try and get a little sleep, he is not surprised, although he is annoyed, to be aroused by a sepulchral "Klank, klank, klank!" He knows it is Throstlewaite's old duck-legged brown cow, going down to the vacant lot on the corner to fight anything that gives milk.

And he waits, and listens to the "Klank, klank, klank!" until it reaches the corner, and a terrific din and medley of all the cowbells in the street tell him the skirmishers have been driven in, and the action has become general.

Then on until morning, Mr. Joskins hears the "Tinkle-tankle" of the little red cow going down the alley to prospect among the garbage heaps; and the "Rankle-tankle" of the short-tailed black and white cow, skirmishing down the street ahead of an escort of badly-assorted dogs; and the "Tringle-de-ding, tringle-de-ding, ding, ding" of the muley cow that goes along on the sidewalk, browsing on the lower limbs of the shade-trees; and the incessant "Moo-oo-oq-ab-ab" of the big black cow that has lost the clapper out of her bell, and has ever since kept up an intermittent bellowing to supply its loss.

Mr. Joskins knows all these cows by their bells, and he knows what they are doing, and where they are going.

Although it has murdered his dreams of a quiet home, yet it has given him an opportunity to cultivate habits of intelligent observation, and has induced him to register a vow that if he is ever rich

enough he will keep nine cows, trained to sleep all day, so as to be ready for duty at night; and he will live in the heart of the city with them, and make them wear four bells apiece, just for the pleasure of his neighbours.

A Glorious Chance.

A DRAPER was wishing for a law compelling people to buy more goods than they wanted, when in walked a man who inquired for calico. Several pieces were shown him, and when he found a pattern to suit, he asked—

"Can you let me have this calico for three-halfpence a yard?"

"Three-halfpence! Why, you must be crazy."

"It's for my sister, who has just arrived from Australia," quietly observed the stranger.

"I don't care if she has just arrived from the North Pole," answered the merchant. "That calico, sir, is sixpence a yard."

"Seems to me that this is a glorious opportunity for you to make a reduction," said the would-be customer. "She will make the dress up in style, wear it all the way back to Australia, and when she reaches home the Australians will want to know where she got it, and she will answer, 'That dress came from Tubbs's in Oxford-street, and only cost three-halfpence a yard, buttons thrown in.' Then they will club together and send over for three hundred dress patterns, and you can throw the cash right down into your pocket, and never send it, for the law can't touch you."

"You seem to be a fool, sir—a fool!" said the merchant, as he began to pile up the pieces again.

"Very well—very well, sir. I see that you are no hand to grasp an opportunity, and I will look farther. If you die in the poor-house, don't blame me, sir. Don't look so mighty surly, sir; and good-day, sir."

British Birds.

THE months of March and April, says a naturalist, were busy months for our British song birds, both resident and visitors.

Among the earliest arrivals of the migratory birds may be noted the wheatear. These pretty birds have arrived during the last few days, and are gradually increasing in numbers on the Downs.

Blackbirds and thrushes—particularly the latter—are now strong in song. If the passer-by will listen attentively to the thrush, he will distinctly hear that he says the following words: "White hat, white hat; cherry do, cherry do. Pretty Joe, pretty Joe."

In the neighbourhood of London the young thrushes will soon come out of the egg, and a fortnight ago some young thrushes hatched out of a nest in some ivy had begun to "branch"—i.e., perch.

The house sparrows are also just now building. Particular architects are these birds. They will three-parts build their nests, and then pull them all to pieces, as though the design was not right. Starlings are also strong on the build.

It is a curious fact that, as a rule, all birds are more forward in their song and nesting in the neigh-

bourhood of London than in the distant parts of the country. The migratory birds also appear in the vicinity of the metropolis earlier than elsewhere. The theory is that the ground is in a more highly cultivated state near London, and therefore more productive of insect food for the birds, than elsewhere.

Highgate produces some of our earliest birds. It is quite a treat just now at early morning to hear the chorus of thrushes and blackbirds, in the north of London. The bird-catchers have such a respect for the Baroness Burdett Coutts, that they will not catch one of her birds; but it is their opinion that migratory birds will not stop long about her ladyship's premises, as there is not cover enough for them.

Many of the migratory birds make the Devil's Dyke, near Brighton, their first halt on arrival from the Continent; but they do not stay long there; they are soon "off and away." This locality is warm for them, and probably produces food agreeable for them.

The nightingales are due, whatever be the weather, at or about the 14th April. Professionals advise that if proprietors wish to keep their nightingales about their premises all the season they should catch the birds once, and having gently examined them immediately let them go again; for it is an ascertained fact that if a nightingale has once been trapped and handled at the beginning of the season, no device or dainty mealworm will ever ensnare him again. His memory remains good for that season, and no more traps for him till next year.

Young squirrels can be found just now in the nests, which are called "drays." This is important information for the proprietors of woods and fir plantations, where the squirrels sometimes do much and serious mischief to the trees.

A Devil-Dance.

IT is an extremely difficult thing for a European to witness a devil-dance. As a rule, he must go disguised, and he must be able to speak the language like a native, before he is likely to be admitted without suspicion into the charmed circle of fascinated devotees, each eager to press near the possessed priest, to ask him questions about the future while the divine afflatus is in its full force upon him.

Let me try to bring the whole scene vividly before the reader. Night, starry and beautiful, with a broad, low moon seen through palms. A still, solemn night, with few sounds to mar the silence, save the deep, muffled boom of breakers bursting on the coast full eight miles distant. A lonely hut, a huge, solitary banyan tree, grim and gloomy. All round spread interminable sands, the only vegetation on which is composed of lofty palm-yran, and a few stunted thorn trees and wild figs.

In the midst of this wilderness rises, spectre-like, that aged, enormous tree, the banyan, haunted by a most ruthless she-devil.

Cholera is abroad in the land, and the natives know that it is she who has sent them the dreaded pestilence. The whole neighbourhood wakes to the determination that the malignant power must be

propitiated in the most solemn and effectual manner.

The appointed night arrives: out of village, and hamlet, and hut pours the wild crowd of men, and women, and children. In vain the Brahmins tinkle their bells at the neighbouring temple; the people know what they want, and the deity which they must reverence as supreme just now.

On flows the crowd to that gloomy island in the starlit waste—that weird, hoary banyan. The circle is formed; the fire is lit; the offerings are got ready—goats and fowls, and rice and pulse and sugar, and ghee and honey, and white chaplets of oleander blossoms and jasmine buds. The tom-toms are beaten more loudly and rapidly, the hum of rustic converse is stilled, and a deep hush of awe-struck expectancy holds the motley assemblage.

Now the low, rickety door of the hut is quickly dashed open. The devil-dancer staggers out. Between the hut and the ebon shadow of the sacred banyan lies a strip of moonlit sand; and, as he passes this, the devotees can clearly see their priest.

He is a tall, haggard, pensive man, with deep-sunken eyes and matted hair. His forehead is smeared with ashes, and there are streaks of vermillion and saffron over his face. He wears a high conical cap, white, with a red tassel. A long white robe, or *angri*, shrouds him from neck to ankle. On it are worked, in red silk, representations of the goddess of small-pox, murder, and cholera. Round his ankles are massive silver bangles. In his right hand he holds a staff or spear, that jingles harshly every time the ground is struck by it.

The same hand also holds a bow, which, when the strings are pulled or struck, emits a dull booming sound. In his left hand the devil-priest carries his sacrificial knife, shaped like a sickle, with quaint devices engraved on its blade.

The dancer, with uncertain, staggering motion, reels slowly into the centre of the crowd, and then seats himself. The assembled people show him the offerings they intend to present; but he appears wholly unconscious. He croons an Indian lay in a low, dreamy voice, with dropped eyelids and head sunken on his breast. He sways slowly to and fro, from side to side.

Look! You see his fingers twitch nervously. His head begins to wag in a strange, uncanny fashion. His sides heave and quiver, and huge drops of perspiration exude from his skin. The tom-toms are beaten faster, the pipes and reeds wail out more loudly. There is a sudden yell, a stinging, stunning cry, an ear-piercing shriek, a hideous, abominable gobble-gobble of hellish laughter, and the devil-dancer has sprung to his feet, with eyes protruding, mouth foaming, chest heaving, muscles quivering, and outstretched arms swollen and straining as if they were crucified!

Now, ever and anon, the quick, sharp words are jerked out of the saliva-choked mouth—"I am God! I am the true God!" Then all around him, since he and no idol is regarded as the present deity, reeks the blood of sacrifice.

The devotees crowd round to offer oblations, and to solicit answers to their questions. "Shall I die of cholera during this visitation?" asks a grey-

headed farmer of the neighbourhood. "O God, bless this child, and heal it," cries a poor mother from the adjoining hamlet, as she holds forth her diseased babe toward the gyrating priest. Shrieks, vows, imprecations, prayers, and exclamations of thankful praise rise up, all blended together in one infernal hubbub.

Above all rise the ghastly guttural laughter of the devil-dancer, and his stentorian howls—

"I am God! I am the only true God!"

He cuts, and hacks, and hews himself, and not very unfrequently kills himself there and then. His answers to the queries put to him are generally incoherent.

Sometimes he is sullenly silent, and sometimes, while the blood from his self-inflicted wounds mingle freely with that of his sacrifice, he is most benign, and showers his divine favours of health and prosperity all round him.

Hours pass by. The trembling crowd stand rooted to the spot. Suddenly the dancer gives a great bound in the air; when he descends he is motionless. The fiendish look has vanished from his eyes. His demoniacal laughter is still. He speaks to this and to that neighbour quietly and reasonably.

He lays aside his garb, washes his face at the nearest rivulet, and walks soberly home, a modest, well-conducted man.—*Fortnightly Review*.

The Egotist's Note-book.

THIS is an age of discoveries. Dr. Schliemann has unburied Troy. Some students are said to have found one of the missing arms of the famous Venus of Milo. Now, a shepherd on the banks of the Ilyssus has just unearthed the very altar mentioned by Thucydides as having been dedicated to Apollo by Pisistratus, grandson of the tyrant of that name. Professor Koumonouthes purchased the relic for a trifle, but his pleasure was damped by the recollection of the wiles which he was compelled to practise in order to obtain the treasure for anything like a reasonable sum. "For the sake of that alone," said he, "I have become a deceiver and a hypocrite. I have lowered myself to the beguiling of a simple peasant." It is intended, says a correspondent, to beguile the peasant still further, by purchasing his plot of land on false pretences. The discovery of this stone furnishes a clue to the real site of the world-famed temple of the Pythian Apollo.

Paris is laughing itself to death over a drama which has just been produced at the Ambigu Theatre by a sugar-refiner of Ham. The piece is supposed by the author to abound in pathetic interest and thrilling incidents. For the life of him, he cannot understand why the audience should almost scream with laughter when a young lady, weeping bitterly, enters upon the stage, and touchingly exclaims—"He deserted me thirteen years ago, leaving me nothing—but his address." Nor is the hilarity of the house diminished when the poor deserted creature afterwards announces that she is "just sixteen," so that she must have married at the age of three, which, it must be admitted, is very young, even for a heroine. "Sweets to the

sweet." The author had better have stuck to his sugar refinery. Nothing he has done at Ham will save his bacon on the Parisian stage.

NEW VERSES.

The Russian Empe-ror

Thought he'd like to go to war,
And he marched forth his soldier-ee;
But when he meets the Turk,
And the cannon get to work,
Why, perhaps he'll go home to tea.

But if the Russian bear
Should the turbaned Turkey scare,
And march to Constantino-p-lee,
We'd say "Thanky" all the same—
But that's just our little game—
And send the fellow home to tea.

How is it that widow ladies are the special victims of money-lending swindlers? Here is a widow advertising for the loan of £40 to save her from the clutches of a member of the grasping fraternity. To make the generous lender secure, the widow offers to let him take out the advance in board and lodging. It is to be hoped that the "Save me from the money-lender" cry will not degenerate into a mere trick to entrap lodgers or to catch husbands.

The amount handed over to the Artists' General Benevolent Institution from the sale of the catalogues of Mr. Grant's pictures was £265. That sum represents the proceeds of about six thousand catalogues, and furnishes some indication of the immense number of persons that visited the collection. There are not many people willing to say a good word for Mr. Grant; but he at least deserves credit for having made what must have been a misfortune to him the means of doing good to others.

Passing through Watling-street a day or two since, I saw a milkman put down his milk-cans, and, filling one of the small tins, drink off the contents at a draught.

"That must be good milk," said I to him, with the intention of asking where his dairy was situated.

"I'd like a drop o' beer better," he answered, rather suggestively.

"I suppose you'll easily make that up?" said I, pointing to the empty can.

"Lor' bless you," he remarked—"twouldn't stand it. But it'll come out of the measure easy enough."

I didn't ask any more questions.

I've often heard of the custom of "beating the bounds," but this is how I saw it done in the City on Ascension Day. Policemen heading the procession, and clearing the way. Beadle in full uniform, carrying his silver-mounted mace in one hand and a gorgeous bouquet in the other. Aged vicar in gown and hood, with mitred wand and bouquet, supported by churchwarden, also bearing a bouquet. Curate in canonicals, with mitred wand and bouquet, and the people's churchwarden. Two gentlemen with bouquets, followed by three ditto. Aged individual carrying a bundle of unused withies, and directing the

operations of about twenty boys, armed with two withies each, and belabouring each other when there were no walls or landmarks handy. Policeman bringing up the rear, and keeping off the crowd of envious youngsters. It was a curious spectacle in a crowded City thoroughfare, and might have provoked ridicule, but for the recollection that the same sort of thing has been going on for nearly a thousand years. There are plenty of absurdities tolerated, with not half such a respectable title to antiquity.

A curiosity dealer carried with him to the studio of an artist a picture which he had just bought, with the view of reselling it to advantage.

"I gave only ten pounds for it," cried he, panting for breath.

The artist ran his hands through his hair.

"Ten pounds, eh? Well, that's about what it's worth."

"Isn't it worth more? Not worth more than ten pounds? Then I've been robbed!"

A gentleman, dining in a French restaurant not far from Leicester-square, complained that he had not been served with fish.

"Ah, sir," said the head of the establishment, "fish is an article altogether too delicate. It requires to be kept fresh. Give me some beef now," pointing to the beefsteak on his customer's plate, "or give me mutton, and in a fortnight or so I can make anything I like of it."

The gentleman looked at his plate again, and thought he'd have some cheese.

In the lobby of the House of Commons—

"Sir, I have always had the courage of my opinions."

"And I, sir, have always had the courage of opinions which I did not possess; and that, you must admit, requires greater firmness."

Two ladies were speaking of their servants—

"Mine is excellent," said one of them. "She is hardworking, honest, and all that one could desire; excepting that I have to repeat my orders a dozen times before she understands them."

"As to mine," remarked the other, "it's of no use to tell her even a dozen times. She is completely deaf."

THE morality of the business world may be considered at a very low ebb, when almost directly a new article has been introduced, and is by universal consent considered a success, worthless imitations of it appear. These imitators trade upon the reputation gained by the original invention, and if not narrowly watched bring it into bad repute. Imitations are in existence of the "New Patent Stocking Suspender," the only safeguard being the name of Almond stamped on every clasp and on the band. Every lady desiring health and comfort should provide herself with a pair of these useful articles, which may be obtained of Mr. H. J. Almond, 9 and 10, Little Britain, London, E.C. Ladies' size, post free, 3s. 2d. per pair. Size of waist required.

The Domestic Confessions of Mrs. Chignal.

THE SECOND.

DEAR Alfred came down very slowly, and certainly behaved in the most unfeeling manner. Here is his response to my heartrending appeal for help:

"Well, what are you halloaing about now?"

Just as if I was in the habit of crying for help.

"Oh, Alfred!" I gasped. "A man—a man in the cellar!"

"Plee, sir, there aint, sir," cried Sarah. "It's missus's fancy. It was the cat as she heerd."

"Oh," said Alfred. "And I suppose the cat has been sitting here smoking bad tobacco all the evening."

"I'm sure it aint, sir," said Sarah. "Cats never smoke."

"Go and fetch him out," said Alfred.

And I felt ready to faint, what with fear and the girl's brazen impudence.

"Plee, sir, there aint no him to fetch out," said Sarah, defiantly. "And if I'd ha'known that I was coming to a place where the people would try to take away a poor girl's character, I'd—I'd—I'd nev—nev—never have darkened your door, I wouldn't."

Here she burst out into a tremendous fit of sobbing.

"Stand away from that door," said Alfred, who was getting cross.

"You aint going to beat the poor cat, are you, sir?" said Sarah.

"I said stand away from that door," cried Alfred.

"Oh please, sir, you won't kill him, will you?" cried Sarah.

Here there was another coal avalanche heard to descend, and a big knob banged up against the door, making me retreat half-way up the stairs.

Just then Sarah gave a horrible squeal, and began to howl into a pocket-handkerchief, which I feel sure was one of mine; for Alfred got out of patience, took hold of her by the shoulders, and whisked her away from the cellar-door, ending by throwing it open, and letting a cloud of black dust into the kitchen.

"Send Jane for a policeman," said Alfred then.

And baby being asleep, I went and called her down, when the horrible girl ran off with alacrity, and instead of siding with her fellow-servant, and coming back at the end of five minutes to say that she could not find one, back she came at the end of two with a great, black-whiskered fellow, whom she eagerly showed the way into the kitchen, and then stood staring, with her mouth as wide open as her eyes.

I did not want to be there, but I found myself obliged to go and stand on the kitchen stairs.

"Here, constable," said Alfred, in his bitter, satirical manner, "there's a cat in this cellar somewhere, and we want it fetched out. I think it's a Tom."

The big policeman turned round to Alfred, and gave a wink; then he turned on his lamp, and went slowly into the cellar.

"Now, then, squire," I heard him say, "out yer come."

There was no answer, and the coals scrunched so under the policeman's feet, that I got thinking of what a mess he'd make when he came out.

"There aint nobody here, sir," I heard the man say.

And Sarah's head, which had been covered over with her apron, came slowly out.

"Only cats and black beadles," she said, spitefully.

"I'm sure there is somebody there, constable," said Alfred.

And then Sarah's head popped once more under the apron; for the policeman called out from inside the coal-cellar—

"Oh, here you are, eh? Just come and look here, sir. Here's a lark!"

Alfred started into the coal-cellar, and the next moment he shouted to me—

"Come here, dear."

"I'd—I'd rather not," I said. "Don't ask me, Alfred."

"Come here directly!" he shouted, in such a very tyrannical way that the very policeman must have felt ashamed of him.

And I went into the cellar, to find the light of the policeman's lantern shining on two legs hanging down from the cellar ceiling just above the top of the coals, and every now and then they kicked just as if they were trying to swim.

I shrieked, and was running back; but Alfred caught me by the wrist.

"Stand still, stupid!" he said—"he can't hurt you. He's been trying to get up the hole, and out through the pavement."

"Now, then, you sir, come down," said the policeman.

And the legs gave a kick. And now it was that I saw how the creature who belonged to the legs must have been piling up the lumps of coal, and stood on them, while he tried to creep out of the cellar the same way as the coals came down, when the lumps must have slipped, and made the noise we heard in rolling down.

"Spose you go up outside on to the pavement, sir," said the policeman, "and stop him if he wriggles himself up. I dessay he's got the round iron up. You hold my bull's-eye, mum."

And then, if the wretch didn't stick his horrible lamp into my hand, while Alfred ran up out of the front door, and gave a stamp on the pavement as soon as he was there.

"Now, then, is it to be upwards or downwards?" said the policeman.

And the legs gave a horribly distorted kick. It seemed so dreadful, that I gave a little shriek.

"Don't be alarmed, mum," said the policeman, kindly; "he can't get away."

When all the time I'd have given anything to see the creature run off.

"Now, then, d'yer hear?" said the policeman again; and this time he laid hold of the legs and gave them a pull. "Why don't you come down?—the game's up."

He gave a horrible tug at the legs, and I expected to see the man come in half, when I meant to have put the lamp on a lump of coal and run away; but

now I was fascinated, and the policeman dragged again and again.

"He's either holding on pretty tight, or else he's got stuck fast," the policeman said to me, in a confidential way, as he loosed his hold for a moment, and the legs began to kick feebly, just like those of a frog.

Then, after wiping his forehead, the policeman took hold of the legs again; and I couldn't help it, I was obliged to speak, and I cried out—

"Oh, pray, mind!"

"Mind what, mum?"

"You might pull them off," I gasped; for I felt horribly frightened, and I had heard of such things happening in machinery.

"There aint no fear o' that, mum," said the policemen, grinning.

And he laid hold of the legs again, and dragged at them, sending the coals rattling down the sides of the heap.

Just then I gave a shriek and dropped the lantern, for something touched me.

"Why don't you mind?" said a voice.

And I knew it was Alfred's; for he had come into the cellar unheard, and he now picked up the lantern.

"He had got the iron out, policeman," said Alfred; "but he's tight wedged in, and can't move. He says you're pulling his legs off. What's to be done?"

The policeman gave his ear a rub, and then went and had another pull at the legs.

"Yes, he's in pretty tight, sir, and no mistake. Shall we let him bide?"

Alfred gave a comical look at me, and I thought him very heartless; for he said—

"Well, yes, we might do that; but we should have to put the iron thing in the pavement, or somebody will be falling; and we might send Sarah in to tickle his feet now and then, to amuse him and keep him awake."

"Oh, Alfred!" I exclaimed, "you'll never be so cruel as to—"

"Hold your tongue, little woman," he said, sharply.

And then I saw that he didn't mean it.

"There's no pulling him down, anyhow," said the policeman; "for he won't come. We shall have to get the bricklayers to work to get him out."

I declare it all sounded so horrible, that I felt quite faint; and then, to see the cool way in which those two cruel men took it. I turned all in a cold perspiration.

"Tell you what, sir," said the constable, for all the world as if he had hit upon a bright idea—"let's try and get him through."

"Come along, then," said Alfred.

And I was following them, when if that brutal man didn't tell me to stop where I was, with the lantern.

"But—but, Alfred, suppose he should come down?" I gasped.

"Collar him," said Alfred. "But don't be afraid; he won't."

And there I stood, thinking all sorts of things. Once I thought I'd ask for a divorce for cruelty; then I thought I'd cry; for in the coolest way pos-

sible I heard Alfred ask the policeman to have some beer, and go into the wine-cellars and draw it, leaving that poor wretch dying, stuck in the hole, and me feeling as if I had got a horrible nightmare, and staring at those legs.

Yes, I can compare it to nothing else but a nightmare; and as I stood there, gazing at them pendant from the ceiling, they began to swing about, then to give a few short kicks, like legless gasps, and I felt that the man must be dying.

I wanted to call out, but my mouth was dry, and tasted of coal dust. I felt more faint; and, in spite of all my efforts, not a shriek would come. There were the voices in the kitchen, with Alfred's heartless laugh; and there were those two horribly convulsed legs fascinating me more and more, and in imagination I could see the wretch's penitent, distorted face, as in agonizing despair he writhed in his narrow cell.

Oh, it was too horrible! And yet I could not remove my eyes, but held the lantern up and gazed, as the poor creature's throes became slower and more regular, his body contracting so that the legs were drawn up higher and higher, till first the knees, then the shins and ankles, and lastly the feet, were drawn by his convulsions right up into the hole, and then nature would bear no more. I sank on the coals, and fainted away.

I could not have been in that state many moments before I heard voices—Alfred's and the policeman's; and they sounded hollow and strange, as one said—

"He's got down, then."

And the other—

"Let's get back, sir, or he'll frighten your missus."

Those voices came from above. Then came the clang of the coal iron on the pavement, and as I was in the act of struggling up from among the coals, Alfred and the policeman came into the cellar.

"Hallo," said Alfred, "did he knock you down?"

"Is he dead?" I gasped.

"Dead—no. Where is he? Didn't he come down here?"

"No," I said, feebly; "he seemed to contract, to draw up."

"By Jove, Bobby!" cried Alfred, "he's got away!"

I revived after that; for it was a fact—the poor wretch had drawn himself out and escaped, when I thought that he was dying. And I went upstairs, and had a glass of wine, while Alfred kept the policeman on the premises to see Sarah away.

But, bless you, she had locked up her boxes, and gone, sending the next day for her wages and clothes, and saying that she couldn't stop with such inhuman people any longer, and we might keep her character.

Of course I had to seek for another maid at once. And nicely Alfred went on, saying it was a pity I had not had Aunt Tatlock up, for she would so thoroughly have enjoyed the coal-cellars romance; and ended by telling me it was all my fault for not choosing more respectable servants.

Nice times we had while we were without. I declare it's a perfect wonder to me that dear baby is alive; for what with the extra work, and the excite-

ment because we had given the girl an extra sovereign, Jane seemed to go quite off her head.

Here are a few of her goings on.

The second day after Sarah had gone, I went up in the nursery, to find baby asleep, with the window wide open above its head. The next day, she had taken it out in the perambulator, as usual, in its white cachemire dress, which I had embroidered myself with the greatest care. Then it had on a white hood, lined with swansdown; and when it was about time for them to come back, I stood at the window watching for them, and thinking that nobody in our terrace sent out a child for a walk looking as well as mine.

At last I saw them coming, and I assure you I felt horrified—I could not believe my eyes; for Jane came along, pushing the perambulator with something in it all covered with mud. And—oh! how can I tell it?—it was my sweet babe!

I rushed to the door, and seized the dear innocent, covering my light silk dress with noisome mud, as I clasped the wailing little thing to my bosom; for new silk can be bought at four shillings a yard, but a baby!—

"What have you been doing, you wicked—wicked—wicked girl?" I cried, as soon as I could get my breath.

"Please 'm, it wasn't me; it was the perambulator," said Jane, bursting out crying, "as would up—up—upset just where the men had been sweep—e—e—eeping up the mud."

"And do you tell me the poor baby went into the mud?"

"Yes, 'm," said Jane, "head over heels, so as you never saw. He was right outer sight, and he never cried a bit till the mud got in his eyes coming home."

"Take him upstairs, and wash him in hot water this moment," I said. "You wicked, careless girl. I'm quite angry with you."

"Which it wasn't my fault, mum," snivelled Jane.

And she took the baby up to the nursery, while I went into my own room to change my muddy dress.

I declare I had not been in the room ten minutes before I heard the baby shrieking, and I rushed up, half dressed, to the nursery.

"What is the matter?" I exclaimed, as I saw Jane holding the little darling in its steaming bath.

"Please, 'm, it's baby as don't like being washed," said the stupid creature.

"Then you've got the soap in its eyes!" I exclaimed.

"No, 'm, that I'm sure I aint," said the horrible girl. "I aint used no soap yet."

"Then the water must be too hot!"

"Lor' no, mum! You try," she said.

So I put my hand in the water, for I never like to trust to servants about such things; but I drew it out directly, with a cry of pain.

"You wicked, cruel girl!" I sobbed, as I snatched the screaming baby out of the bath.

And, there, if its poor little skin hadn't turned quite pink; and, if I had not run up and rescued it, I feel certain that I should have had a boiled baby to have shown dear Alfred on his return.

I believe my tears must have acted beneficially

upon its lovely skin, for the darling was none the worse.

The very next day, if the wicked wretch didn't burn its darling little mouth, which is just like a pretty pink button-hole; and I know it must have suffered horribly, for there was its food—which you know it has regularly out of one of Hungry Maw's patent anti-diagonal feeding bottles, with a long tube and a branch to it, for all the world like a fire engine—there, I say, was its food, scalding hot, and, to make matters worse, on tasting it, if she hadn't been and made it horrible with salt, instead of using finely powdered loaf sugar, which is always kept on the nursery shelf.

Poor baby, what a life it led! How some poor little creatures ever continue to exist, I don't know, when their mothers leave them to the wicked nurses, as some do. As I said to Alfred the other night, paint cannot be good for children, especially delicate children like our baby; for Jane had actually been giving it a dreadful painted toy to suck, as it lay on the nursery floor; and she, all the time, leaning as far as possible out of the nursery window, giggling at the servants on the opposite side of the way.

Why I parted with Jane at last was on account of her forgetfulness; for she had the most dreadful head that was ever placed upon two shoulders. If you wanted her to do a thing, and told her, you were obliged to see that it was done, or she would be sure to forget. Here is an instance.

We had got a new servant in the place of Sarah, and she seemed so nice and respectable, and cooked so well, that we had a little dinner party of six, counting ourselves.

"Now, Jane," I said, when I went up in the nursery after I was dressed, "whatever you do, let baby have a good sleep while we are at dinner; and then, just before the dessert is brought in, feed him well, sponge his face, and put on his best lace frock, and bring him down to the dining-room for the ladies to see."

"Please, 'm, hadn't I better feed him afterwards?" said the great goose.

"No, you silly girl," I said. "If you feed him first, he'll be good-tempered, and won't cry."

"Very well, mum."

"And make yourself nice and smart, and don't wear that stupid chignon, with the padding sticking out."

I declare it was delightful the way in which that dinner went off, and Alfred was quite heavenly in his temper. We had the Rawleys and the Whittleboys, both young married couples, who have no children, only what I may be excused for calling great expectations, and I was all agog to show them the baby.

A mother's pride, you know, but surely excusable.

The dinner was over, and the dessert on the table. How Rachel, our new maid, managed to wait and cook, and do everything, and look so smart, I don't know; but she did everything *au merveille*; and I glanced triumphantly at Alfred, and he actually winked.

Fortunately, no one saw him, and I kept glancing at the door for Jane and the baby, but they did

not come; and at last it was time for the ladies to go with me to the drawing-room, and I rang for Rachel, and told her to call Jane down directly.

This was a pity, for I wanted baby to be brought down in an impromptu fashion.

"She wants to show her bantling," said aggravating Woppy.

"And very proper too," said Mrs. Whittleboy.

"Oh, yes, let's see it," said Mrs. Rawley.

And Alfred winked at the gentlemen, and they all laughed.

Just then the door opened and I put on my most maternal smile; but it wasn't Jane, but Rachel, and at a glance I knew there was something fresh the matter.

"Oh," I gasped, "what is it? Speak out at once."

"Please, 'm, I can't make nothing out of Jane," said Rachel.

"Why, what is it?" I cried.

"Be calm, dear," said the ladies.

"She's so strange," murmured Rachel.

"She's been at the wine," said Alfred, in his suspicious way.

"No, sir; she's a-crying and calling random-like about the baby."

"Fetch her down, Alfred," I cried, half-fainting. "Perhaps she's let it fall from—the window—oh—oh—oh!" I sobbed hysterically.

"Which she's a-sitting on the bottom step outside the door, mum; and she says she shall run away and drown herself," said Rachel.

Alfred started up and ran out, dragging in the wicked, wild-looking creature, staring blankly at everybody in turn, as she sank down on her knees.

"Where's the kid—I mean baby?" said Alfred, correcting himself.

The girl opened and shut her mouth like a gold fish; then she looked at me, and opened her mouth again, but made no sound.

"Jane, you wicked girl," I shrieked, unable to contain myself longer—"where is my child?"

She looked at me, then at the company, and then threw back her head, uttered a dreadful cry, and said—

"Oh, 'm, please 'm, forgive me, 'm; and I'll never do so no more."

"My child!" I shrieked. "Give me my child," and I rushed at her.

"Please 'm, I can't—it's lost."

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"WELL?" said Vasquez, speaking in a quiet, urbane manner. "You see how kind and considerate I am towards you?"

Si glared at him as if he would have torn him to pieces.

"Don't look cross, my good, honest friend, who always take the side of right," sneered Vasquez. "And look here, my man. When a rifle is placed in your hands, don't misuse it; for here are fourteen or fifteen stout fellows ready to bring you down if you prove false. Yes, I see you are thinking of the

nursery story of William Tell and the tyrant Gesler. I'm not the tyrant Gesler, and you are not going to shoot me. Now, what do you say?"

"I cannot do it," said Si, bitterly.

"Yes, yes," panted Ruth—"do it, Si. You can hit the apple at fifty paces easily."

"And if I fail, Rewth?" said Si.

"You will have saved me from these wretches."

"Yes, yes," he gasped; "but—but—oh, Rewth, my darling, I could not—could not do it!"

"Come, your answer," cried Vasquez. "There is no time to waste."

"I cannot," said Si.

And Ruth uttered a low moan.

"Unloose them," cried Vasquez, savagely. "Tie the blackguard neck and crop, and throw him into the hut. Don't hurt the woman—she's too pretty," he added, with a laugh that maddened Si.

The ruffians had only been waiting their opportunity, and in a few minutes Si was bound hand and foot, in spite of his tremendous struggles; while, when Ruth tried to run to him, a rude arm was thrown round her waist, and she was secured by her hands being tightly bound behind her.

"Take her off at once, three of you," said Vasquez, laughing; "and pray be tender with her. She is this gentleman's wife."

"Si—Si!" shrieked Ruth, wildly, as she was being hurried away; and her cries seemed to pierce her husband's heart.

"Stop!" roared Si—"stop, I consent." Then to himself, "Better shoot her than this."

"Ah, I thought you'd hear reason," said Vasquez, coolly. "You are so clever with the rifle, Slocum."

"Thanks, Si, my own," moaned poor Ruth, as she struggled to his side, and, falling on her knees, laid her head against his hands.

"Ruth, have you thought of the consequences if I miss?" whispered Si, in a strangely hoarse voice.

"Yes," she said, smiling in his face, "I should die. I am quite ready; you will not miss!"

"Now," exclaimed Si, whose every nerve seemed to thrill, "you promise us our freedom if I make this shot?"

"Yes," said Vasquez. "You heard me."

Si looked at him full in the face; but Vasquez met his glance with a Spaniard's cool hauteur masking his face, so that his heart was not penetrable.

"Give me my own rifle," said Si.

"Untie him," said Vasquez, coolly; and it was done. "Where is your rifle?"

"Hanging in the cottage," was the reply.

Vasquez hesitated for a moment, and looked hard at the trapper. Then, smiling, he pointed with his cigarette to where Ruth was kneeling.

"I shall trust you, Master Si Slocum," he said, coolly. "We have your charming wife as hostage, so you will not play us false. Fetch your rifle."

Si stepped into his house, took down a small rifle that hung over the chimneypiece, and came back.

"Good," said Vasquez, coolly. "Ah, we shall have a pleasant little scene, without any of your rowdy friends of Randan Gulch to interfere. But we shall want an apple."

Si took a large red apple from his pocket, and laid it upon a piece of rock.

"Yes, that will do. I won't be hard," said Vasquez. "I should have picked out one half the size; but let it pass. Now, then, load."

Si Slocum drew a long breath, and stared about him like one in a dream. He told himself that it could not be true, but that he should wake presently, and find that he had been passing through this ordeal in fancy.

Then slowly taking his rifle, he examined it for a few moments before letting the butt fall to his feet; when, glancing at Ruth, she met his eyes with a look so full of encouragement, that he uttered a hoarse sigh, took out his powder flask, measured and poured in a small charge. Then wrapping a tiny bullet in a scrap of leather, he placed it in the muzzle of the piece, and forced it down upon the powder, fixing it with a few sharp blows. In another few moments he had placed a cap upon the nipple; and then, turning to Vasquez, he said, hoarsely—

"Do you mean this, man, or is it merely to try me?"

"Place your wife fifty paces off," said Vasquez—"out there, towards the ravine."

Si read his doom in the wretch's face, and, approaching Ruth—

"Untie her," he said to the men.

Vasquez's followers glanced at him.

"Yes, untie her," he said. And as he spoke he turned his rifle, and laid it so that at any inimical motion on the part of Si Slocum, or attempt at escape, he could bring it to bear. "Of course," he continued, "you could not do so shabby a thing as to attempt to fly, friend Si; but I may as well tell you that half a dozen of my men are covering you with their rifles, and if they missed you, they would be sure to bring down your wife."

"I trust to your word, sir, to set us free if I do this," said Si, quietly.

And as soon as his wife was at liberty he led her fifty paces away from the tree, and took out a handkerchief to bind her eyes.

"No, no—let me look at you, Si," she pleaded. "I shall not flinch."

"You will disturb my aim," he said, in the same low, hoarse voice.

And she submitted to be bandaged, without a murmur.

"Rewth, child," he said, "with God's help I shall split that apple all to pieces, without hurting a hair of your head; but I mistrust that wretch. If I succeed, and he seems disposed to turn treacherous, never mind me, but run for your life."

"Oh, no," she sobbed, "I could not leave you."

"Come, quick, there," said Vasquez.

And Si seemed to be still busy with the bandage.

"Freddie is hiding somewhere near. Rewth, dear wife, for his sake, if one of us is to die, let it be me."

"Si!"

There was an indescribable anguish in that word; but he was imperative.

"Rewth, wife of my young love!—you, who swore to obey, obey me now. If the ruffians seize me, drop down on your hands and knees, and try to get away. Cross behind the hut, and you may get

away, and bring help to save your boy—perhaps me; at all events, Miss Kate. Make for the gulch. Stand firm!"

As he spoke, he took out the apple, bit a small piece out, so as to make a white spot, and then placed it upon his wife's head, she uttering a loud moan.

"You will do as I tell you, Rewth? This is, perhaps, my last command."

"Yes," she said, feebly.

And then, at a word, she stood up, firm as a rock, with the apple upon her head, the white patch standing out clearly in the morning sunshine, as Si Slocum paced back to the tree where Vasquez was standing.

To his surprise, Si found his enemy holding a small looking-glass in his hand—one that had hung up inside the hut; but Vasquez dropped it to his side, and drew back, while Si stood facing him in silence.

"Well, friend Si, are you ready?" exclaimed Vasquez.

"You have tried me enough, sir, and punished me enough. I would not ask mercy for myself, knowing what I do. But for her sake," he continued, pointing, "let there be enough of this."

"I offer you your freedom, dog," exclaimed Vasquez, savagely, holding his pistol ready to fire at the slightest motion on the part of Si. "Will you take it on my terms?"

Si looked at him for a moment, and then glanced round to see that while he had been busy Vasquez had made his own arrangements, and eight rifles, resting on stones, were aimed direct at Ruth.

"Yes," said Vasquez, smiling as he saw Si Slocum's glance—"one treacherous motion on your part, friend Si, and she would fall, riddled with bullets. One is obliged to take such precautions when dealing with honest men."

"You give us our freedom once more?" said Si, glaring at him, and longing to send a bullet through his treacherous skull.

"I have promised it," said Vasquez.

"Ruth, stand firm!" shouted Si—"in ten seconds I fire."

He took aim with his back to the tree, and in another moment the trigger would have been drawn, when Vasquez shouted—

"Stop!"

Si grounded his rifle, smiling.

"Thank you," he said, looking deadly pale; "I thought you couldn't mean it."

"Indeed?" said Vasquez, smiling. "You will find I do. Look here, friend Si," he continued, securing the little glass to the trunk of the tree with a small knife, "the shot you were going to fire was too easy. Turn your back to your wife, rest your gun on your shoulder, look in the glass—there, you can see her plainly—and fire at the apple thus."

Si staggered back, staring at his enemy, while the great drops of sweat rolled down his face.

"It is too cruel—too cruel!" he moaned.

"If he has not fired in a minute from now, I shall give the word, my lads," said Vasquez, in a loud voice, "and you can all try together to hit the apple."

Ruth was seen to totter for a moment, and then

a word from her husband made her once more stand firm; and seeing that he could expect no mercy, he turned quickly, looked in the glass, and then closed his eyes, while his lips moved.

It was an awful moment that—when, feeling that he must act, Si Slocum prepared to take aim. His hands shook, and a strange feeling of indecision came over him; but nerving himself for the worst, he now gazed steadfastly in the glass.

A few moments before, he had felt that he could strike the apple from his wife's head without injury to her; now he mistrusted himself, and trembled for the result.

But there was not a moment to spare. He knew that Vasquez was merciless enough to shoot Ruth, and that it was in the hope of seeing her fall by her husband's hand, and so gratifying his revenge, that he had hit upon this plan.

So, placing his rifle so that it rested upon his right shoulder, he placed the butt against the tree, and looked straight into the little hand glass.

Yes, there stood Ruth; and as he shifted the barrel of the gun a little, he found, to his surprise, that he could look straight along the barrel, and take correct aim.

His hands grew moist, and the cold sweat came out in greater beads upon his forehead, as he wondered whether it was possible to perform this feat, and he hesitated; but a shout from Vasquez made his nerves once more terse as steel.

"If she is to die, it shall be by my hand," he muttered.

And then, standing firm, as if cut from bronze, he raised the butt of his gun an inch, lowered it half an inch, altered the barrel as it lay upon his shoulder, glanced along its reflection in the glass till it bore exactly upon the white spot on the apple, and, without pausing another second, drew the trigger.

As the sharp report rang out, he saw the reflection of the apple in the little glass fly to pieces, and then he felt faint.

He roused himself though directly, as the shout of surprise and admiration rang in his ears; and as he looked round, it was to see Ruth unharmed, holding the bandage which she had torn from her eyes.

"Now, Vasquez," exclaimed Si, stepping towards his captor, "I claim your promise."

"Promise!" snarled Vasquez—"promise to you, you canting, hypocritical dog! Bind him hand and foot, and I'll keep him as one would a tame bear. He shall shoot for us, if we don't kill him first."

"Coward—liar!" roared Si, clubbing his rifle, and swinging it round his head.

But Coyote Tobe sprang upon his back, as half a dozen others seized him in front; and in another minute, in spite of his desperate resistance, he was lying there bound and helpless, while Vasquez came and savagely placed his heel upon the poor fellow's lips.

"That's how I like to see my enemies," he snarled. "Did you think I should be such an idiot as to let you go, after all the harm you did me? No, friend Si Slocum; you shall come up to my home in the mountains, where you shall see strange sights, if I don't first put out your cursed eyes. Here, fetch the

woman—what, curse you all, you've let her go! Quick, fetch her back."

So much had Si Slocum taken up the attention of all present that no one knew when Ruth, in obedience to her husband's command, had escaped; neither could they tell in which direction she had fled. It was enough that she had gone; and as she was a woman, every one who went in pursuit took to the cracks and the open part of the surroundings; while poor Ruth was laboriously climbing rocks, and crawling along a precipitous slope that would have needed care on the part of a goat, till, reaching a narrow crack nearly hidden by foliage, she crawled in, glad to avail herself of the refuge, for the sounds of pursuit now began to ring upon her ears.

Vasquez foamed with passion as one after another of his men returned without having seen Ruth, and Si smiled as he thought that his wife and child were safe. Then he turned cold, as he lay there upon his back; for the thought flashed upon his mind that, in his rage and disappointment, Vasquez might hang him upon the tree in front of his house.

But it was not at the thought of death, but at the peril which threatened one of those dear to him; for, as he glanced up at the tree, his eyes lit upon the branch of one behind his hut; and there, lying close to the bark, he made out the form of his boy, the poor little fellow, terrified by what he had witnessed, having remained perfectly motionless throughout.

Si dragged, so to speak, his gaze from the trembling child, and wondered that some one or another of the followers of Vasquez had not seen him before. There was hope, though, still. Freddie might be overlooked; and if he were, he must have seen the direction taken by his mother, and would probably rejoin her.

Just then Vasquez advanced, with his quiet, sneering smile. The rage that had made him storm and rave at his followers had passed away; and he seemed all suavity, as he stooped over Si, rifle in hand.

"I'm afraid my boys have been somewhat rough with you, friend Si Slocum," he said, pleasantly, "and that you must be uncomfortable. Under these circumstances, I have decided to put you out of your misery."

Si did not blench, but lay looking him full in the face.

"Surgeons say that a shot in the heart is best; but having had experience in these matters, I have more faith in one in the brain. For instance, I place the muzzle of this rifle between your eyes like this, and when I draw the trigger, the bullet will pass directly through your brain, and pass into the earth, cleansing itself of impurities as it goes."

He suited the action to the word as he spoke, resting the muzzle of the piece between Si Slocum's eyes. But the prisoner never flinched, nor altered the direction of his gaze.

"Shall I fire now, friend Si?" said Vasquez, with a sneering laugh.

"I am your prisoner," said Si, coldly. "When you please."

"Curse you!" roared Vasquez. "I'll find a means of making you beg for mercy yet. Here, unbind his

feet, and set him upon his legs; we'll take him with us. Tobe, I hold you answerable for his safe custody. Now, then, for the ranch, and forward."

"I'll hamstring him, if he attempts to escape," said Tobe, pleasantly.

While a cold sweat burst out upon Si again, as he saw half a dozen of the ruffians rush to the hut, and, after taking such objects as pleased them, set it on fire in four places.

The dread that oppressed him was for his boy, lest, overcome by the smoke, he should cry for help, or fall headlong into the flame.

Relief came to him directly; for he saw that the breeze that agitated the leaves bore the smoke slightly on one side and towards them, instead of into the tree, forming a curtain of inky blackness which shrouded Freddie from his sight.

Five minutes later, carefully watched by his captors, and wondering what had become of Jerry, Si Slocum was being led off to the mountains.

CHAPTER XXXIX.—RUTH'S MESSENGER.

"I 'SPECT I find somefin' 'reckly," said Jerry, catching Mickey by the arm. "Jack no make noise like dat for nuffin. Ole Jack, what de matter, ole boy?"

The dog whimpered again, and made a dash for what looked like a rift in amongst the rocks; when, as Jerry and Mickey advanced cautiously, a loud voice exclaimed—

"Stand, or I fire!"

"It's de missus—it's de missus!" cried Jerry. "Don't shoot, missus—don't shoot; it am only Jerry and Mass' Mickey Doran. Oh, be joyful! Is you all right?"

"Yes, Jerry, I am safe," said Ruth; for she it was.

"An' de little Freddie—where am dat boy, ma'am?"

"Hush, he's here asleep, poor child!" said Ruth. "He joined me this afternoon unhurt, and we have been trying to get to the gulch; but there were always scouts on the road there, ready to turn us back. Oh, Jerry, your poor master!"

"Oh, don't say um dead, missus—don't say um dead!" blubbered Jerry, piteously.

"No, not dead, but a prisoner. They have taken him up the mountains."

"Am dat all?" cried Jerry. "Oh, lor bless your soul, ma'am, little Freddie and Jerry take deir gun and go fetch Mass' Si Slocum back, soon as ebber Jerry am well."

Explanations on the part of Mickey followed, Ruth's heart failing her as she heard the news about poor Kate; though there was a gleam of hope when it was told her that Wallace Foster was on the track of the abductors.

"But have you seen Patsey?" she asked.

"No," groaned Mickey; "I only have my fears."

"Depend upon it she has got away safe, then, to the gulch," cried Ruth; "and help will soon be coming."

"If I could only think so," groaned Mickey.

"Hold up, man," said Ruth, firmly. "Your trouble is only imaginary, mine is certain. Come, let us get back to the ranch and Mr. Townsend. Jerry, can you carry Freddie?"

"If Mass' Mickey Doran here help um on dis back, I carry dat boy, bress um heart, till de middle of nex' year about stopping."

Freddie was roused up, and began to whimper; but on being placed upon Jerry's back, he clasped his little arms round the black's neck, laid his head down, and went off to sleep; while Jack leaped and barked, as he trotted on to lead the way to the ruined ranch.

They found Mr. Townsend sleeping still, and all was silent in the desolated place.

But they felt little dread of danger now, Ruth arguing that the enemy would know that the news of the attack upon the ranch would reach Randan Gulch, where Si Slocum was held in great respect, and that directly it was known a strong party would be sure to come to avenge the wrong. Under these circumstances, of course it would be madness to return; and, laden as they were with prisoners and booty, they would be making the best of their way back to their own stronghold.

"And I was to go back to Master Wallace directly," said Mickey, dolefully.

"And I to my husband's help," said Ruth to herself; "and yet we must wait for daylight. It is impossible to do anything till the morning," said Ruth, quietly. "Help must come then; so let us pray for the day."

It was a cruel night for all. No one slept but Freddie; even Jerry lay wide-awake, nursing his wounded arm, which beat and throbbed terribly. The morning seemed as if it would never come; but at last, when it did, the sun rose glorious and unclouded, as if its beams were falling once more on peace and happiness, instead of upon the ruined homestead of an industrious, frugal man.

Ruth groaned, and the tears streamed from her eyes, as she gazed on the smouldering embers of their pleasant cottage.

A minute later, and she was the busy, earnest woman.

"Who has a pencil and a scrap of paper?" she cried.

Both Mickey and Jerry shook their heads, and Ruth made a gesture of despair.

"Bedad, we'll pick the masther's pocket," said Mickey.

And thrusting his hand in Mr. Townsend's breast, he drew out an old pocket-book, tore from it a leaf, and handed it and the pencil to Ruth.

In a moment she had written largely these words:—

"For God's sake, help! Vasquez's men have burned Slocum's ranch, and carried him and a woman off. We couldn't get to the gulch, for they have scouts on the road. Two wounded here. Help!"

"RUTH SLOCUM."

"Yes," said Mickey, "that'll bring 'em; but how to get it to the gulch?"

"So," replied Ruth, tearing a long strip from her cotton dress, to which she pinned the note.

"Bedad," muttered Mickey, "she's going to fly it like a kite."

Ruth's next movement was to double the long strip over and over again, lengthwise, till the note

was safely wrapped inside, to the great wonder of Mickey and Jerry.

"Here, Jack, Jack!" cried Ruth. And the dog bounded up, to gaze, with his great, intelligent eyes, in her face. "Hold still, boy. Look, you see this?"

She held the packet before the dog, and he stood wagging his tail, while he barked sharply.

"There," cried Ruth, as she tied the long strip, collar-fashion, securely round his neck, and made fast the last knot. "Now, look here, Jack—the gulch. Do you hear?—the gulch!"

The dog leaped up, barking, bounding about, and staring at his mistress.

"Do you hear, sir?—the gulch! Go on—quick. Go on—the gulch—the gulch!"

Jack barked furiously, gave a spring in the air, then leaped up at his mistress's finger, as she pointed in the direction of the track, and then bounded off.

"Sure, an' will he go?" said Mickey, wonderingly.

"Yes," said Ruth, "faster than a man on horseback."

But, to her dismay, Jack reappeared at the end of five minutes, with something in his mouth.

"My rifle—my rifle!" shouted the boy in delight, as he ran to meet the dog, and took it from his mouth.

"The gulch, Jack—the gulch!" he then cried.

And the dog barked twice, and went off at a gallop.

Ravines and steep slopes, thick bushes and undergrowth, were nothing to Jack; for where men could not climb nor force their way, the dog could easily creep; and consequently he dashed away almost in a straight line for the rough mining settlement.

In half an hour he was well on towards the forest, along which he began to skirt in a regular steady trot, his tail out straight, head down, and tongue out.

Straight away he went, the bearer of a message asking for help; and, to all appearances, he would soon be at his journey's end.

But poor Jack had a gauntlet to run. Ruth was quite right—there were scouts left by Vasquez, who owed his position as leader to his semi-military ways. He always took precautions against surprises, and to well secure his retreat. He had left two pairs of his ruffians at intervals on the way to the gulch, ready to follow if they saw danger approaching, and give his party ample warning.

And so it happened that the dog was seen by the first couple, just as they had made up their minds to follow their leader.

Crack—crack!

Two rifle reports echoed among the mountain slopes; and poor Jack gave a spring in the air, and then fell over upon his side.

AN advertiser wishes to meet with a house, &c., which must be within a stone's throw of the Crystal Palace. It is pretty clear what he intends to be up to.

"WHY is it?" it is asked, "that nearly every M.P.'s wife in London is a handsome woman?" It is simply because nearly every M.P.'s wife who is not a handsome woman is left at home.

A Python Peril.

IT was one hot day in the middle of summer, when the sea gave back a dazzling glitter under the sun's rays, that a little trading cutter lay at anchor some fathoms from the shore of Congo, on the west coast of Africa.

Leaning over the bulwarks was the lieutenant, a broad-shouldered young fellow of thirty, whose open face wore a gloomy expression, as his eyes wandered over the beautiful country before him without seeming to take it in. This part of the coast was thickly wooded, and glorious with that rich tropical under-growth so wonderful to the eyes of the natives of temperate climes. At any other time Charles West would have revelled in the scene; but now his mind was full of the captain's daughter, Alice.

She had been taken on board at Mouravia, where she had been spending some months with an uncle who was a missionary; and during this short time she had won every heart in the place. All the blacks in the town had assembled on the shore to bid her farewell; and men, women, and children united in sobbing and weeping as she said good-bye. She had made herself everywhere beloved by her gentleness and good nature; and the regret of these simple and ignorant people at losing her had a great effect on the young lieutenant.

The sailors already would have done anything for her, thinking themselves well repaid when she gave them a smile and a word of thanks for any service. But to West she was rather distant, or he fancied so; and this was the cause of his moody abstraction as he leaned over the vessel's side.

As his eyes rested on a tree not far from him, something moving in it arrested his attention, and he became aware that a monstrous python was hanging in the branches, its eyes fixed on the vessel. The creature must have been between thirty and forty-feet long, and its body was covered with scales, that glittered in the sun's rays as they fell on them through the foliage.

An involuntary shudder ran through the young man's frame—not that he was a coward; but there was something so repulsive to him in anything, large or small, in the shape of a snake. As he looked, the head was projected towards him, and the forked tongue darted out. In spite of the distance between them, he shrank back, and then turning, called the attention of some of the sailors to the great reptile, just before it unwound its massive coils, and quickly disappeared in the thick underwood.

The thought struck him that if the serpent should return at night, it might be possible for it to attain the ship ere they were aware of it. It would be better to follow it now, and kill it by broad daylight, than to risk being attacked and taken by surprise. A thought of Alice, and the danger to her should that happen, caused him to act upon the idea, and ask permission from the captain to go on shore. It was readily granted, when he explained the reason of his wish; so, accompanied by five of the sailors, all armed to the teeth, he went ashore.

Going in the direction which he fancied the python had taken, they were soon in the midst of a thick forest of immense trees, among which were

a great many fine specimens of the wonderful baobab tree, its immense branches spreading up to the sky, and sometimes shutting out every ray of the sun. It was a relief to get away from the scorching brightness of the beach, and would have been cool and pleasant under the trees, only that the denseness of the growth shut out even the refreshing breeze which came off the sea.

Being excited by the prospect of a little danger, or perhaps a great deal, they let pass unnoticed the first symptoms of a storm; but when the wind, rising quickly, began to move through the tree tops, West gave the order for an immediate return to the ship. The quickly growing darkness rendered this order difficult to obey, for the men could not find out which way they had come; and though it was three in the afternoon, it quickly became as dark as night in the forest, while the air was full of weird noises: the roaring of the blast, the groaning of the trees as they bent under its powers, and now and then a noise like thunder, as some mighty monarch of the woods, possibly hundreds of years old, was overthrown by the violence of the gale. By degrees, however, the tumult subsided, light again penetrated through the foliage, and the hurricane passed off as quickly as it had come.

It was only after long hours of walking, and when they were tired out, that the sea once more spread itself out before them, heaving still, and showing a thousand reflections of rose-colour from the sunset-tinted clouds overhead. The sun almost touched the horizon, and, tired though he was, Lieutenant West could not but stop to admire with wonder, and something of awe. It is only with a stormy sky that the wonderful sunsets of those latitudes are to be seen, as in calm weather the sky is almost invariably cloudless. The young man's eye swept the surface of the ocean somewhat anxiously for the cutter, but where she had been anchored there was nothing to be seen but the gradually subsiding waves.

"There she is, sir," exclaimed one of the men suddenly, as he pointed to where, nearly a mile from them, the little vessel was aground, her bowsprit buried in the sand, and her mast and yards entangled among the branches of the trees.

They soon reached her, and found that the storm had not done her any serious damage. The captain had had two tents setup on the beach—one for the sailors, and the other for his daughter, that she might be in shelter until the vessel could be set afloat. Alice stood by her father, pale and agitated, and, as West's glance noted it, the captain said—

"She was afraid you were lost, Charley, or that the snake had made an end of you," and then moved off to give some order to the sailors.

This remark had dispelled the girl's pallor; and she would have followed him, bending her head to conceal her blushes from the lieutenant, when the latter arrested her.

"I am deeply grieved," he began, in a low voice, "to have caused you so much alarm."

"You need not reproach yourself," she interrupted, coldly. "It was the storm that frightened me so terribly."

But she seemed to regret the speech the next

moment, as the young man turned quickly away, and made a movement as if to stop him. Then, seeing the eyes of one of the men upon her, she walked away in the opposite direction.

Those who had remained on board had been more fortunate than the lieutenant's party, for they had had another glimpse of the python; but it had disappeared before they could reach it. This reappearance of the monstrous reptile made them keep a good watch during the night, but without any result. However, at daybreak, West was awakened from a dream—in which he had cut off the serpent's head at a blow, and been rewarded with the hand of the captain's daughter—by a fearful shriek which chilled his very blood.

He sprang up on the instant, and, dashing out of the tent, beheld a spectacle which he would never forget in all his after-life. Right past him sped Alice, terror leading her wings, her lips parted, face colourless as marble, and her long golden hair streaming behind her. Close after her glided the python, with all the sailors and the captain in pursuit. The young man stood for a moment stupefied with horror, and then joined in the chase. It was in vain that the men, armed with hatchets and knives, aimed blows at the tail; its motions were so rapid that it escaped their strokes. The poor girl was only a few steps in advance, with the reptile gaining on her every minute, when she gathered all her strength, and, changing her direction, fled to the forest, where the serpent followed her, distanced for the minute by the sudden alteration of her course.

The whole crew seemed to have lost their heads entirely. They blundered on headlong, tumbling over roots and scrambling through bushes and brambles, instead of avoiding them; so that first one and then another was left behind. West alone retained his self-possession. He was soon in advance of the others, armed with a hatchet which he snatched from a man he had passed, apparently entangled hopelessly in some brambles.

The poor girl, without a thought save of distancing her pursuer, penetrated farther and farther into the recesses of the forest; but as she felt that exhaustion must soon render her an easy prey, after crossing a little open glade, she took refuge in the hollow trunk of a tree that presented itself as a hiding-place, and uttered one more piercing cry for help, which reached the ears of him for whom it was intended—

"Charley, save me!"

He heard, and the words gave him renewed energy and courage. The reptile flung its lithe coils round the tree, so as to enclose poor Alice in its folds, yet without touching her. She clasped her hands in an agony of despair as her enemy, seeming to be aware it was impossible for her to escape, now turned its attention to the lieutenant. Its eyes glittering with a cruel, steely light; its forked tongue darting out, and quivering between its gaping jaws—it presented a threatening and terrible aspect. The captain and some of the others came panting up. What was to be done? It was impossible to fire at the reptile, for fear of hurting the imprisoned girl. They tried to strike it with their hatchets and knives, but it avoided their strokes, and threatened them with its fangs.

"My poor girl! my poor girl!" groaned the captain. "Save her, Charley! cannot you save her?"

The young man had been driven to despair for a moment; but the girl's white, agonized face appealed to him dumbly, and he roused himself, to see that the captain was about to throw himself madly upon the serpent. He sprang forward, and caught him by the arm.

"For Heaven's sake, sir, think what you are doing! You will perish without aiding your child. Bring me a rope, quick!"

A few minutes passed in painful suspense, while one or two men went off to fetch a rope. No one asked the lieutenant what he wanted it for; but all depended on him to solve the difficulty, the captain being so unnerved as not to be able to think of anything or do anything. While the men were gone, West and the others kept the monster's attention attracted by threatening it with their weapons, not allowing it a moment's respite in which to attack the girl. In less time than could have been expected, though it seemed an age to those waiting, a rope was brought, and the young officer, calling out some encouraging words to Alice, took it between his teeth, and clambered up into a neighbouring tree. From it he glided on to a branch that projected ten feet above the reptile's head; and then, making a running noose at the end, threw it so cleverly as to catch the serpent just below the head. On drawing it back quickly, the noose tightened, and he had it securely. It raised itself in a fury, and menaced its captor; but as it could not reach him without uncoiling itself from the tree, West had time to fasten the cord securely to the branch, and to let himself glide rapidly to the ground.

"To work now," he cried, setting the example. "Strike him! Keep still, Alice, and you are safe."

The men all set to, and inflicted fearful wounds and gashes all over the twisting, writhing folds. Its convulsions were frightful; but, as it could not free its head, the assailants were safe as long as they took care to avoid being crushed in the coils which their attack had now made it remove from the tree. In its agony, it tore off the bark of the trees, and snapped off great branches, striking blows that echoed through the wood, while from its throat escaped rattlings and hissing that pass description.

As soon as he could safely do so, West hastened to fetch Alice from her hiding-place, when she fainted away in his arms. He carried her back to the tent, leaving the sailors to extinguish every remaining sign of life in the still moving coils of the snake.

The next evening a strong tide enabled them to get the cutter afloat again; and when they were assembled on board, the crew gave Lieutenant West a cheer that echoed far over the waves.

The captain found it impossible to express in words his gratitude to his daughter's deliverer; so he thanked him by making her over to him for good as soon as they returned to England.

ISN'T it woman, and not her wrongs, that requires to be re-dressed?

The War Correspondent.

BY THE WANDERING JEW.

FIRST LETTER—MY INTERVIEW WITH RUBLU PASHA.

I DON'T wish to be proud; but, sir, you were lucky to get me. I was just going to tender my services to the *Times* when I had your letter, and in an hour I was off.

And now I am here, on the blue Danube—the beautiful blue Danube—gazing at its sapphire waters when I go to rest at night, and looking upon them flashing in the sun when I rise betimes.

By the way, I may as well tell you that I found the Iron Gates closed, and watched by three monitors, each at the head of a gun class; so that I had to go round some distance, and finally reached Broila.

I had a little difficulty at first with the heat, for Broila is warm; but after a bit of a hunt, I found a boatman to take me across the river, and finally found myself in the presence of Rublu Pacha.

"Don't want any," he said, abruptly, as soon as I entered—"no watches, no chains, no anything."

"I beg your pardon," I said, loftily—"do you take me for a pedlar?"

"Well, aint you?" he said, as he took his fez off, and wiped his bald head with the blue tassel.

"Sir," I exclaimed, "I am no pedlar. I am the Wandering Jew, and I come here in the guise of a War Correspondent to an influential periodical."

"Connected with a paper, eh?"

"Yes, sir," I said, "I am."

"Couldn't have come at a better time, Ikey," he exclaimed. "I just wanted to do a bit of paper. Things are awfully tight here. Look here, my boy. Do a bill for me at three months for five hundred pounds Turkish. No Hambro' sherry, and no bad cigars or pictures of ballet dancers; but hard coin."

"My dear pacha," I said, sitting down on a hand-some ottoman, and taking the amber mouthpiece of the hookah he offered me, "you mistake the object of my mission. I do not help gentlemen to fly kites. I do not discount bills. I never dabble in dinner sherry, diamonds, doubtful bonds, or cigars. I am the Wandering Jew, and my mission is to send, week by week, full accounts of your doings on the Danube, the feats of the Faithful, the wrecking of the Russ, and the soaring of the Crescent. *Be chesm*—on my head be it. Allah is great! Thy servant has spoken."

"*İb maso rutan!*" he exclaimed. "Right you are. You shall have every facility, dear boy."

"It is good," I said. "*Fak awa.* But how is it you speak such good English?"

"Wait a wee, my son," he said, with a slight closing of the sinister eyelid. "Let's have the decoction of the Turkish berry."

He clapped his hands, and a dark Nubian slave entered the tent.

"Coffee, Mustapha," he said; and turning to me—"What's it to be—brown fire or white fire? Give it a name."

"The brown," I said, smiling. "Cognac with *café noir*."

"Thy words are the words of wisdom, my son," he said. "Mustapha, bring in a bottle of the medicinal water—the cognac with the gold seal."

Mustapha bowed to the earth, or rather to the rich Turkey carpet spread over the grass, and disappeared.

"You were saying how was it I spoke such good English, dear boy," he said, laying his fez down. "Well, the fact is, I was born at Bayswater."

"A renegade!" I exclaimed.

"Now, that's shabby," he said, "and spiteful. You can't turn anything else, because you're a Jew. S'help me Abraham, a Jew you must stay. Now an Englishman can turn anything. You took me for a Turk, come, now!"

I looked at his bald head, black beard, olive complexion, and squat figure, as he sat cross-legged before me, and I was obliged to nod.

"Of course you did," he continued, laughing. "I've been a Turk ten years."

"Do you go to mosque?" I said.

He winked knowingly.

"Sometimes," he said. "Not often."

"How many wives have you got?"

"Now, look here, Solomon," he said, with a fat smile on his fat face, "what is this? Bismillah—bosh—nothing. Do you think I'm going to tell you all the little secrets of my establishment, for you to fake up your letters, and send every word to the papers? No; as the chief of the Softas says, 'Hook ee Wal-lakah.' I haven't lived forty-five years for nothing."

"My dear pacha," I said, "nothing but good shall appear concerning you, if you see that I am well treated, fed, protected, and kept *au courant* with the war matters as we go on, otherwise I'll make you as black in the eyes of the British public as yon Nubian slave."

"British public—British public," he repeated after me, giving his lips a smack—"by jingo, Soloun, I'd give something to walk inside a British public now, and call for a pint of Burton. Cool—beady—balmy—beautiful! I should like one."

"Then why did you turn Turk?" I said, bitterly.

"Because it paid, oh, sublime son of an Eastern father—that's why! But there, make yourself easy; I'll do the right thing by you, and see that you have every attention, as sure as my name's Perkins—I mean Rublu Pacha."

"Perkins, eh?" I said.

"Yes, dear boy. As the laureate said, 'John Perkins is my name, England was my nation, Turkey is my dwelling-place, for here there's rank and station,'"

"But what makes you call yourself Rublu Pacha?" I asked.

"Not my doing, dear boy," he said, laughing. "It was these humbugs. I believe, on the occasion of my tendering the services of my sword to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan—that's the proper way of putting it, you know—I got a little into difficulties over yonder; sold my commission in the Fuseladiers, and, after a general bust-up, came here, and got a good command directly. But, as I was saying, on the night when I tendered my sword to his Imperial Majesty, I believe that the forbidden waters flowed rather freely; and when they asked me my name, all I could say was True Blue. That was enough for them; and ever since I've been called Rublu Pacha."

I nodded, and the Nubian entering with the coffee,

we qualified it, and took several cups of it with our pipes.

"But you did not tell me," I said, "how many wives you have."

His left eyelid descended very slowly over his eyeball, and he looked very solemn, as he said—

"Never mind."

"Oh, I don't mind," I said, rather huffily; "only recollect I belong to the Russell—Sala—Forbes—Henty—Gay clan, and I shall find it out, if you don't tell me. I was out with H.R.H. the P. of W. in the Teria, and he told me everything—found it best, and so will you."

He sat thoughtfully for a few moments, making clouds of Latakia. At last he spoke.

"Well, the fact is, dear boy," he said, "meeting, so to speak, a fellow-countryman, I feel a kind of delicacy in speaking; for I've rather gone it since I've been out here."

"Married a good deal?" I said.

"Well, rather," he said, solemnly. "Well, there, don't be too hard on a fellow—I'll own to thirty-six; that's near enough."

"None but the brave deserve the fair," I said.

"And so you're in command of this army corps, eh?"

"Yes—cuss 'em!" he said, spitting fiercely; "and they're a wretched lot."

"What, the Bashi-Bazouks?" I said.

"Boshy-Bazouks, I call them," he said. "There's no trusting them to do anything except run, unless there's a flock of sheep to ravage, and then they're on."

"But you've got your army in pretty good order, have you not?" I said.

"Tidyish—tidyish, my son. They haven't much stomach for fighting, unless there's something to be got by it. Things are not very rosy, for the dogs have got a stupid notion into their heads that they ought to be paid."

"What fools!" I exclaimed.

"Aint they?" he said, whisking away the flies that came buzzing into the tent. "After a while we shall get on better, when the rascals have some places to plunder."

We sat and smoked for a while in silence.

"They're pretty good at a loot, aint they?" I said.

"By jingo—I mean by Allah," he exclaimed, "I'd back them to loot a place against any soldiers in the world. They clear off everything, even down to a chest of drawers or a coalscuttle. It is their nature to. I'm glad you've come, though," he said, meditatively. "I'll make it comfortable for you, and you can—quite indirectly, you know—stick it into the B. P. that Rublu Pacha was a Bayswater man. Don't put it too plain; but I think it's only fair that I should get a little of the *kudos*, and not for all of it to go to Hobart Pacha. He isn't everybody."

"No, of course not," I said. "But you may rely upon me to do you justice; for I'm one of the most truthful of correspondents."

"You look it," he said, winking. "But there, I see we understand one another; and you shall stay with me, share my tent and my movements, live as I do, and we'll smoke all through the heat of the day."

"But a horse?" I said—"I must have a horse."

"A horse you shall have, my son, and ride with

my staff. We'll make it right for you, dear boy, depend upon that."

With this understanding, I left him, and went to where I had left my small portmanteau. I was only just in time, for there were half a dozen irregular rascals practising up the art of plundering; and while one held the portmanteau, another was trying to prize it open with his sword; when, snatching a rifle from a sentry, I clubbed it, and brought the flat of the stock against the back of one fez-headed ruffian, with such force that—skittle fashion—he went down, upsetting four more; but only for them to leap up, yelling with fury, draw their crooked swords, and rush upon your War Correspondent, with the full intent of immolating him on the altar of their wrath.

They did not kill me. I'll tell you why in my next; wherein I shall also relate how I went to the front, and saw the fight begin.

A Rising Youth.

A CLEVER boy has had his life made a burden to him by the imposition of a young widow, who boards with pa and ma. She is always sending him on errands, and when he does them, instead of giving him a reward, or even saying "Thank you," she scolds him for being so long, or doing them so badly.

The trodden boy turned at last, and last week, when she sent him up to a hair-store in West Madison-street, with her wealth of golden ringlets, to have a curl put into them, he just leaned pensively over the railing of the bridge, and let a stream of jute and things that would have made Berenice or Mrs. S. A. Allen jealous, cascade into the rippling stream.

Then he went home, reaching the paternal domicile just as the family were sitting down to tea. Said the young widow—

"Charley, did you deliver my parcel? When did they say it would be done? What a long time you were gone! If I were a boy, I could have gone there and back twice in the time."

"Yes, 'm," he replied, meekly,

"Well, when will it be done?"

"They didn't say."

"Didn't say? Didn't you give them the parcel?"

"No, 'm; I found it, but I lost the things."

"Lost the things!—how?"

"They fell into the river."

"Well, you are a nice boy to send on a message! If I was your father, I'd take the hide off'n you with a stick."

"But madam," replied the boy, with dignity, "you are not my father, nor yet my mother." (Sensation.) "Besides, not being a common carrier, and not having entered into a contract with you to carry your parcel for, and in consideration of, any sum, I have incurred no liability, and am liable to no penalty. If I had undertaken to carry the parcel for my own particular profit, my father even would not have been responsible for its loss (see *Butler v. Basing*, 2 C. & P. 614), unless, indeed, he paid me smaller wages because of the opportunity thus afforded me to make small sums. On this point I will only quote *Dwight v. Brewster*, 1 Pickering

(Miss.), 50. But rising from the law to the equity of the case, I have only to say that—"

But before he could say it, his father had moved the young chief justice from the room, and in the safe seclusion of the back-shed engaged in friendly remonstrance with him.

The young widow gave a grateful smile on his return, while the boy went upstairs, and slept on all fours, like a mule.

Despairing of obtaining justice, or even a hearing, at that tribunal, the boy has taken appeal to his mother's supreme court, where he will bring the case up for final adjudication on a writ of *certiorari*, obtained by putting up a lock of that young widow's false golden hair in a piece of silver paper, and stowing it away in his pa's pocket, the evening after his mother had given her husband a letter to post.

The boy thinks his ma will look through his pockets, and as her hair is black, and she is very jealous, he has no doubt but that the decision will be reversed, with heavy damages against the widow.

The Egotist's Note-book.

A GENTLEMAN caught a pickpocket in the very act of robbing him.

"You are not clever enough, my fine fellow," said he; "and what a dirty hand you have!"

"My hand's clean enough," coolly replied the rascal, "it's your pocket."

A French nobleman, over here on a visit, met a gentleman in Pall Mall, and both began grumbling about the wretchedly cold weather. Just at that moment the sun broke through the clouds.

"Confess, now," said the gentleman, "that that bit of sunshine is very cheering."

"Yes," responded the nobleman; "but your sun looks so chilly that I'll wager he wears flannels."

A gentleman, who had entered upon his anecdote, had just finished narrating to a friend an incident that happened in his boyhood.

"That occurrence must have made a great impression upon you," remarked his friend, rather feelingly.

"Why so?"

"Because you have told me the story at least a hundred times."

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The Domestic Confessions of Mrs. Chignal.

THE THIRD.

THERE was a horrible silence for a few moments, and then I put back the affectionate hands of Mrs. Whittleboy and Mrs. Rawley, for they would pat me and choke me with their smelling salts, and then try to undo my things, just as if that would bring back the baby.

Even Alfred was silent, when he saw how I rose to the occasion and issued my orders.

"Mr. Rawley," I said, holding my hand pressed hard upon the bodice of my new grey lutestring, and beating down the wildly agonizing feelings that oppressed me—"Mr. Rawley, take Alfred's place, and hold that wicked girl until the police are fetched."

Jane threw her head back, and uttered a most dismal howl.

"Oh, 'm, please, 'm, I'll never do so any more," she sobbed.

"Alfred," I exclaimed, firmly, "go with Mr. Whittleboy out into the back garden, and bring it in."

"Bring what in?" said Alfred, staring in a curious way.

"The—the remains of my poor sweet babe," I said, in a cold, hard voice, which was like the ice that lies upon the side of a volcano.

"But—but—"

"I tell you," I said, hoarsely, "she has been leaning out, and let the poor babe fall."

"Oh, good heavens!" said Mrs. Whittleboy.

"It is quite too horrible!" said Mrs. Rawley.

"Go," I exclaimed.

"'Strue as goodness, mum," sobbed Jane, "I aint had the window open to-night."

"But you let it fall out," I gasped.

"We'll soon see about that," said Alfred.

And he and Mr. Whittleboy ran out, to return in a few minutes, and find me sitting back in a chair, having my lips and temples bathed with eau de Cologne.

"There's no baby out there," said Alfred, roughly.

"What have you done with it, you hussey?"

"Ple—ple—please, sir—nothing, sir," sobbed Jane.

"Then, where is it?"

"I don't know, sir," sobbed Jane. "I had it upstairs a little while ago, and I went out and left it in the room for a few moments, while I came downstairs; and when I went back it was gone."

"Stolen!" I shrieked, hysterically—for I could not contain myself—"stolen, for the sake of its lace frock! Oh, my child! my child!"

I believe the scene was terribly affecting; for the ladies both sobbed bitterly, and Mr. Whittleboy kept on blowing his nose till it was red.

"Nonsense," said Alfred, in his favourite obstinate, brutal fashion, "who'd steal a child nowadays?"

"Gipsies!" I shrieked. "Some horrid woman must have stolen upstairs while Rachel and Jane were busy, and gone off with their prize."

"Gipsies!—stuff!" said Alfred, in his aggravating way. "What gipsies could come here?"

"They are always having gipsies round by the

back door," I said, "pretending to sell things, but wanting to tell their fortunes. It's one of those wretches, I'm sure."

"Please, 'm," sobbed Jane, "it couldn't have been, for the door was never opened, not no more than the window."

"Then where is my child?" I shrieked. "What have you done with it?"

"Nothing, mum, please, mum; only that it's gone and lost itself."

"Hadn't you better search the house?" said Mr. Rawley.

"Yes, of course, said Alfred, "I didn't think of that."

I shall never forget the anguish of those dread five minutes while the gentlemen were gone to search the house. I knew that there were accidents directly—that Mr. Rawley fell over some plates, and that dear Alfred put his foot right in the middle of the glass dish of tipsy cake and broke it, slipping down and coming in a sitting position on the top of some plates. But why dwell upon that? Such accidents are unavoidable where there is a dinner party, and the servants, in their hurry, set the removed dishes down in the passage.

Perhaps it would have been as well, too, that I should say nothing about dear Alfred's language at the time; for really upon such occasions it does partake of the character that dear mamma terms demoniacal—though, of course, she means ammoniacal, because, like smelling salts, it's so strong that it tingles in the nostrils and ears.

Mrs. Rawley and Mrs. Whittleboy were so kind and sympathizing, they did nothing else but give me glasses of wine, and tried so hard to soothe me; while that horrible girl, Jane, knelt there all of a heap, dividing her time between sobbing and saying that she hoped master would not search her box.

She said that six times in five minutes; and then a light broke in upon me, and I got up and gave a shriek which made the lustres on the gaselier tinkle.

"What is it, love? Oh, do be calm, dear!" said my two friends.

But I struggled away from them, and ran towards the door, screaming—

"Oh, Alfred—Alfred! she's put it in her box."

They were coming downstairs when I cried out, and they all ran back—Jane, as soon as she knew that they were going to search her box, howling dismally in the dining-room, while Rachel knelt down and tried to console her; and I heard her say it was a shame.

"A shame?" I thought to myself—"the inhuman monsters!—when the wretch had probably slain my darling, and hidden its pretty little body in her box."

Oh, it was monstrous! and I felt for all the world like one of the tigresses that you read about being so ready to defend their young.

"Take a little more of this, darling," said Mrs. Whittleboy.

And she pressed a glass in my hand, as I sat out there on the stairs, with the custard cups on one side of me, and the tart and cheese cakes on the other.

I took the glass, and drained it; for it seemed to me like water. Then I called out—

"Have you found it, Alfred?"

"No, 'taint in here," he said; "and we've looked everywhere."

I could bear it no longer; and I ran up—no, I flew up—into the nursery, to see Jane's box lying open, and two of my best lace collars, and a couple of my pocket handkerchiefs, with my name marked upon them, tossed out on to the floor.

Of course, I could not take any notice of such things then, so I held my tongue.

"Have you searched the bed?" I gasped.

"We've searched every place in the house," said Alfred. "I don't know what she can have done with it."

He spoke in such unfeeling, impatient tones, that I could not bear it, and I threw myself upon his breast.

"Oh, Woppy, Woppy, Woppy," I cried, "give me my child, my darling child."

"Don't be a fool," he exclaimed, in his rough, coarse way. "Any one would think I'd got the brat in my pocket. Sit down."

He unwreathed the hands with which I clutched his manly neck, and took no more notice of the wild, appealing look I gave him than if he had been a marble image.

"Would your nurse have washed the baby this evening?" said Mr. Rawley just then, very slowly, and making you creep as he spoke—for he's a horribly gaspy sort of man, who makes round O's of his mouth, and rolls his eyes horribly.

"Yes, yes," I said; "but what of that?"

"Has your sink a big hole to it?"

"Yes," I said, trembling violently—"a very big one."

"So has ours," he said.

I flew to him, and grasped him by the arm.

"Speak, man, I conjure you," I said. "What do you mean?"

"I only thought," he said, "that—that it might be—that—that—"

"Oh, you'll drive me mad," I said, shaking him violently.

"I mean," he said, "that our maid pours silver spoons and things down the sink, and that perhaps—"

"Perhaps what?" I said, stamping my foot.

"Perhaps she might have poured the baby down when she emptied the water after washing it."

"What's the good of worrying the poor woman with such stuff as that, Rawley?" growled dear Alfred, as I sank down on the rocking-chair; and I forgave him for his rough words.

"Well, I only thought, you know," said Rawley.

"No, you didn't," said Alfred, savagely, "or else you wouldn't have said such a thing."

Rawley looked huffy, and began to button up his dress coat; but, altering his mind, he unbuttoned it once more.

You see how accurately I remember every incident, for the scenes of that night seem burned into my brain.

All this time Alfred was banging about the nursery, and turning things over, till the place was in a state of chaos.

"Do you think she could have stuffed it up one of

the chimneys?" said Mr. Whittleboy, in a mildly suggestive way.

And I shrieked out with horror at the thought of the black little darling, half-choked with nasty soot in its pretty little mouth and pinky nose, that never hardly wanted wiping, and in the corners of its pretty eyes, that it loves to rub with its little fists.

"Oh, Mr. Whittleboy!" I said.

"What's the use of being such a confounded ass, Whittleboy?" said Alfred, savagely. "What do you want to frighten her for like that? Now, I ask you, as a sensible man, what the dickens could the girl want to stuff a baby—somebody else's baby—up the chimney for?"

"Well, I only fancied, you know."

"Fancied!" said Alfred, in a tone of contempt that was absolutely freezing.

"Oh!" I sighed, "it's no use. Take me down—take me down!"

"There, don't you begin any of your dear mother's fainting tricks, and make matters worse," said Alfred, brutally. "We shall find the child somewhere."

"Yes," I sobbed, "but it will be dead—dead—dead."

"And then it won't cry any more," said Alfred, who has no more sentiment or appreciation of a pathetic situation than a stone. I declare to you he actually laughed when Miss Bateman was crying over her old lover's child in "Leah," and grinned in "Charles I.," when the King was sent off to execution.

"Let's go downstairs," he said; "it's no good stopping up here. Hallo!"

This was said when Mrs. Rawley and Mrs. Whittleboy came into the nursery to announce that they had searched the kitchen.

"I know where it is," I cried then, as a fresh light burst in upon me—"in the dusthole."

"Such stuff!" cried Alfred.

"No, no, it's true," I gasped. "The wretch killed it, and buried it in the ashes. Go and look!"

The gentlemen rushed off, and they began digging up the ashes and cinders as well as they could with a dustpan; while we all crept down, and stood in the kitchen, shivering with horror. And, oh, what a state that kitchen was in—what with the cooking, and dirty plates and dishes, and Rachel being evidently quite a muddler.

They found a broken vase that I had not missed, four jugs, a dish cover, the head of a china figure, five sardine tins, and such big lumps of cinder and coal that it was evidently quite time we got rid of Sarah—but there was no baby; and the gentlemen came into the kitchen with their backs all over whitewash, and their fronts all ashes and dust, when they had to brush one another, Alfred going on horribly, though poor Mr. Rawley was the worst.

And now, as if matters were not already bad enough, Miss Rachel must sit herself down in a corner and cry, with her apron to her eyes; and, no matter how we spoke to her, nothing could we get but tears.

I don't know what dear Alfred would have done, for he was getting very wroth, if Jane had not given quite a shriek in the dining-room.

We all ran up, thinking the girl must be quite mad; and there, if she wasn't dancing round the room snapping her fingers!

"I know where it is," she shouted—"taint lost; come along."

"Where, where is my child?" I cried, rushing at her.

"I hope it aint dead, though," she said, suddenly becoming very solemn; and her words felt like ice.

And then, although I took her by the shoulders and gave her a shake, it had no effect for a minute. Then she suddenly made a start and ran up the stairs, sweeping over the custard cups, which had not even yet been taken away.

Of course we ran after her, thinking the girl was mad, and I, being first, got hold of the skirt of her dress, and entered the nursery with her.

"Only to think, what a game!" cried the abandoned creature.

"Speak, wretch!" I said—"what do you mean?"

"I forgot all about it," she said.

And she burst into an idiotic fit of laughter.

"Where is baby?" I cried.

And I caught her by the throat, as she threw herself into the rocking-chair, and laughed in an uncontrollable way.

"I'd—I'd dressed him, and got him ready," she yelled out, laughing all the time.

"Yes—yes," I said.

"And he had all his food," she shrieked.

"Yes, yes—go on," I said.

"And—and then I wanted to know if you'd nearly done dinner," she said, roaring between every word.

"Yes—yes."

"And—and—and—ha! ha! ha!—I laid him in the big drawer that was open while I went down."

"Yes," I said, not comprehending.

"And when I came back I must have shut it up, thinking baby was in his cradle."

I stared round the room, for I was so agitated that I could hardly take in her words; but by degrees my strained eyeballs rested on the big nursery chest of drawers—on the big top drawer, and I felt that I was looking upon the sarcophagus of my darling child.

"Then it's smothered—there!" I shrieked, as I reached it in two strides, and seized the handles.

But it was too much. I felt my brain reel, and I saw a hundred lights instead of one, as I staggered back into Mr. Rawley's arms, and Alfred opened the drawer.

Not all at once, though; for he tried to do it by dragging at one handle, when the drawer stuck, and when he tugged at the other side it stuck again; but at last he pulled it open, and burst into a demoniacal fit of laughter.

Then it was dead, and he had lost his senses with the shock!

I rushed forward to seize the lifeless corpse, when there lay my angel, rubbing its closed eyes with its little fists; for it had been fast asleep in its festive innocence, heedless of its mother's bleeding heart.

Of course our party was spoiled, and every one went away out of humour. What else could you expect? And whenever I began to scold Jane about it, the wicked girl began to laugh.

I did nothing about it the whole of the next day, for Mr. Alfred must go off in dudgeon to his club, after telling me at breakfast-time that it was the last time he should ever consent to having friends to dinner at home.

"Then what will you do?" I said.

"Give them a mouthful at the club," he said, in his teasing, tantalizing way.

"And pray, why, sir?" I said, with all an injured matron's dignity.

"Because there will be no babies stuffed into the drawers—there, ma'am," he said.

And away he went.

I was ready for him when he came back, though, at about eight, smelling horribly of tobacco and wine.

"I'm glad you've come at last," I said.

"Why?"

"Because I'm going to have the police here."

"What for?"

"To search Jane's box."

"What's the baby lost again?" he said, grinning.

"No, sir," I said. "But you must remember that she was strongly opposed to its being searched; and, bad as I then was, I could see stolen goods lying about."

"But the girl isn't going?"

"Indeed, sir, but she is," I replied.

By the way, I always call him *sir* when I am angry; and I find it answers. This as a hint to those of my own sex who read these lines.

"When?"

"To-night, sir," I said. "Do you suppose that I can trust my child any longer to such a she-fiend?"

"Humph!" said Alfred.

"Why, only to-day, sir, since you have been out—and I told her she should leave to-night—she has been amusing herself by bringing that dear infant's head in contact with every corner in the house. It's quite full of dents."

"Poor little beggar!" he said.

"There's a great scratch all down its arm, produced by the pin of her brooch; and once, when she was having a fit of crying, she nearly let it fall. I have watched her nearly all day, and only once was I away, and then I left her rocking the child in the chair. I declare I had not been away a minute, when she rocked herself right over, backwards, child and all; and when I remonstrated—"

"Bullied," said Alfred.

"Well, then, sir, bullied, if you like—if the impudent hussy did not turn upon me, and say that small babies like our darling were as soft as India-rubber—Ingy-rubber, she called it—and you couldn't hurt them. Now, go and fetch a policeman."

Alfred had had a great deal more wine than was good for him; and he felt that I knew it, or he wouldn't have gone off so quietly. I can always tell by one of his eyes, which will keep shut.

However, in a quarter of an hour he was back with the same policeman; and, as soon as Rachel had let them in, I sent her for Jane.

"Now, Jane," I said, "there are your wages; but before you go I am going, in the presence of this policeman, to search your box."

"Which, please, 'm, you aint going to do no such

thing," cried the creature, flying up, and displaying her low, vulgar nature in its true colours. "I aint going to have my box searched by no one. And my mother 'll be here direckly, as I've sent for to fetch me away; for I aint going to bemean myself by stopping with such a low, quarrelsome lot; so now, then."

"Policeman," I said—for Alfred sneaked into the background, and left it all to me—"policeman, I wish to examine this creature's box, for I am sure she has a number of things that don't belong to her."

"Which I'm sure she aint got nothing as don't belong to her, so now, then," said the hardened girl.

"Where is baby's gold coral and bells, Jane?" I said, in my most withering tones.

"Which it's only silver-gilt; and you aint sure about the silver, so now, then," said Jane.

"Where is it?" I said.

"Lost," said the brazen creature. "The ribbon came undone out in the street."

"And it fell in your box, Jane," I said.

"No, it didn't," said Jane, beginning to howl; "and I aint a-going to have my box searched, and be sent off, a innocent girl, to prison for nothink at all."

"Where is your box?" I said.

"Standing in the hall, corded up," said Alfred. "I broke my shins over it."

"Then, Alfred," I said, "I desire that you and the policeman bring it in."

Jane flopped down on the dining-room carpet, and began to howl, while Alfred and the policeman bumped in the great box, and the cords were undone, just as there was a ring at the bell.

"I won't have it searched, and I won't have it opened, I—oh, oh, oh!" howled Jane.

"Hold your row, will yer?" said the policeman.

And Rachel opened the dining-room door upon the disgraceful scene to say—

"Please, 'm, here's Jane's mother."

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER XL.—THE RESCUE PARTY.

ONE of the scoundrels who had made such good practice with his rifle ran out to where Jack lay motionless upon the plain.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed, "something tied round his neck. Message, I'll swear."

He stooped down, and began to try and untie the knots; but finding them hard, he drew his bowie knife.

Before it had well left its sheath, there was a loud snarl. Jack had set his teeth in the ruffian's leg in a flying bite, and as, with an oath, the man fell backwards, Jack was off at full gallop for the gulch.

In fact, the dog had escaped unhurt, the bullet having struck the thick knots of the handkerchief, and jarred the back of his skull, so as to stun him for a few minutes; while, before the rifles of his assailants were reloaded, Jack was well out of sight round a spur of the range.

Four miles farther on, a couple more shots were

fired at the dog, one of them striking up the dust in front of him, while the other flew far wide of the mark.

The dog threw up his head, and uttered a sharp bark; otherwise he took no notice, but kept straight on, till about half-way on his journey, when he stopped short, and then began to edge off to the right, to avoid a strong party of men who were advancing to meet him.

Jack evidently did not intend to be shot at any more, and was making tracks so as to give the party, whoever they were, a wide berth; when a cry, faintly heard, was borne to his sharp sense of hearing by the wind.

Jack stopped short, and his ears quivered.

Yes, there it was again—his own name uttered by a familiar voice; and, at full gallop, the dog made for the coming party.

He recognized one long before he reached them. It was Patsey calling him; and bounding up to the girl, who was mounted on a pony, he leaped up at her, licking her hands, barking with delight, and effectually preventing her from examining his novel collar.

"Oh, Jack, stand still!" she cried. And she clung to his collar, just as he was about to bound off to continue his journey to the gulch. "There's something here—a knife!" she cried.

And at last she secured the missive, without which Jack would not stir.

"Good news or bad?" said the storekeeper, who was one of the well-armed party.

"Bad," sobbed Patsey. "Oh, pray—they've burnt the ranch, and carried off Miss Kate Townsend and master, and there's two wounded."

"I guess, gentlemen," said one sturdy miner, "there won't be no peace here till Vasquez and his lot's rubbed off our slate. I'm one as says I sha'n't leave off till it's done."

"So am I"—"And I"—"And I," chorused a dozen more.

And the whole party moved rapidly forward—Jack, apparently divining that his mission was fulfilled, trotting on in advance till he neared the place where he had been shot at last, when he stopped short, and began to bay furiously.

"Good dog!" cried the storekeeper. "Look out, boys, for an ambush. Danger ahead."

They threw out scouts, and advanced cautiously, getting a flying shot at last at the two ruffians, who retreated, however, after ineffectually returning the fire.

"Shall we hunt them down?" said one of the party.

"No, no—relieve those at the ranch first," said the sturdy miner, whom every one looked up to as the leader. "Forward again."

Four miles farther on, Jack again gave warning of danger, and again there was chase given to the two scouts, who, however, fell back like their companions, whom they contrived to join in safety; and without further adventure the relief party reached the ranch, where, in spite of Ruth's prayers to be allowed to follow, the party was divided—the stronger portion, under the guidance of Mickey, making for the track where he had left Wallace; while the rest took Ruth,

Patsey, the boy, and Mr. Townsend straight for the gulch, Jerry leading the mule.

"But I could help," cried Ruth, piteously.

"My poor lass," said the storekeeper, kindly, "you've done your bit. Don't you fret. Here's twenty good men and true as won't rest, I guess, till they've got Si Slocum out of the hands of them rowdies. You go quietly, and leave it to us. He's carried on his game too long."

"Tell you what, though, Mrs. Slocum," said the sturdy miner, "I guess that thar dog o' yours wouldn't be a bad hand at helping to find his master. Let him go with us."

"Here, Jack, Jack!" cried Ruth, and the dog bounded to her. "Look here, Jack," she cried, kissing the miner's rough hand—"this is my dear friend; go with him to find your master."

For answer, the dog leaped up and gave a flying lick at his mistress's face. Directly after, he was smelling round the miner's legs.

"He won't bite, will he?" said the man to Ruth. "I ain't afraid of chaps, but I'm mighty skeart of dogs."

"Not he," said Ruth, smiling sadly. "He'll look upon you as his master till he finds his own. See."

As she spoke, Jack, apparently satisfied with his inspection, thrust his muzzle into the miner's hand, and stood blinking up at him with his expressive eyes.

"That's good," said the man, patting the dog's head. "Wal, I guess I'd rather be friends with yew, old boss, than enemies."

Then, after a few cheers, the two parties separated—Ruth, weeping and sad, for the gulch, and the fighting men following Mickey and Jack across the ravine and up the gap, right away for the flat-topped hill and the pine clump where Kate and her father had been left.

Before they were half-way there, Jack, who was hunting about, picked up a fragment of cloth, over which he seemed to be in ecstasies, barking and whining as he now laid his nose to the ground and hurried on.

"Guess that's something his master wore," said the storekeeper. "Yes, it's cloth off his jacket, I'll swear. Boys, we're on the right track. Keep the dog in sight, and your shooting-irons clear; for it won't be long, I reckon, 'fore there's a bit of a fight."

But, like many other storms, this one threatened for long enough without taking place. Clever as the dog was, he lost the trail of the returning party, and they were glad to take up that left by Wallace, which was soon afterwards pointed out by Mickey, by this means giving the enemy a long start.

A stern chase is proverbially a long one, and so it proved—night falling upon the party and compelling them to camp beneath the shade of some firs; while it was quite evening the next day before they came up with Wallace Foster, lying perfectly exhausted in his track, the poor fellow having partaken of no food for many hours, and being quite unfit to proceed, in spite of his energy, till he had had a long rest.

It was now evident that the band of Vasquez was

more numerous than had been anticipated, and, after the capture of Kate by one portion of his followers, the chief had sent them off towards the stronghold in the mountains, while he had gone to join the party who were to destroy Si Slocum's ranch.

Delays, deviations, the rugged nature of the country, and Wallace Foster's worn-out condition, all tended to upset the plans of the relief party; and so it fell about that, after finding that Wallace had certainly taken the wrong track, one which had been made by the scouting parties, while those who held Kate had gone straight for the mountains, it was decided to return to Randan Gulch, where Mr. Townsend was lying seriously injured, and where Wallace was soon after lying, burned-up with the brain fever, which seized him before he was carried into the settlement.

The arrangement to return was dictated by wisdom, as the mountain stronghold lay to the north of the gulch; and it was there that the ruffians must be assailed by those who thirsted to set free the poor girl whom they supposed to be there, a fellow-prisoner with Si Slocum.

CHAPTER XLI.—THE PRISONERS AT THE CAVE.

SI found himself hurried away by his captors, Vasquez coming occasionally to the front to see that all was well; and, from the way in which he was treated, he augured badly; for, though he was spared pain and suffering now, he felt sure that it was so that he might be the more severely tortured afterwards.

He had seen enough of Vasquez to know that he was cruelly personified; and now, whenever he came near, a strange feeling of repugnance and hatred ran like a shudder of aversion through his frame.

This, then, was the monster who had destroyed the happy home of his father, and now, by a strange fatality, had carried on his injury to the home of the son.

"But Rewth has escaped, and the boy is with her by this time," thought Si. "Thank heaven, they are spared."

Then he fell a-musing as to the future, and his chances of life.

"They'll soon know of it up at the gulch," he said to himself; "and I guess there's enough good men and true up there to make a bit of a fight for me, and to get the better of these wretches."

"Yes," he continued, "and they've got Miss Kate. Well, poor girl, there's Mr. Wallace Foster won't leave any stone unturned to get her free. There's a chance of life yet; and, if I do get free, and the chance—Father—mother, your son will try and avenge your wrongs!"

"The viper—the rattlesnake! How is it such men get to live? Wal, I guess it'll be time to talk when I get loose again."

It was a long, weary walk, with his hands bound behind his back as they were; but Si Slocum never murmured—never even glanced at his enemy, when Vasquez came up alongside, and muttered some sneering curse or allusion. It was enough for Si that his wife and child were out of the monster's power; and he smiled to himself, even in the midst

of his torture, when he thought of the success of his plans for Ruth's freedom.

"I guess I can build another ranch when these snakes are wiped out," he muttered; "and if they don't look out, it won't be long before I'm free."

For he did not put much confidence in Coyote Tobe, with his threat of hamstringing him, inasmuch as that worthy passed the weary hours of the journey in repeated applications to a bottle of Bourbon whisky, which he carried slung under his right arm.

At last, by the trend of the mountains, Si Slocum knew that they were about abreast of Randan Gulch; and, as he expected, they began to make a *détour*, with the ground rising step by step, till suddenly, as they came near a steeper ascent, Si felt himself jerked back, for Coyote Tobe had placed a broadly folded handkerchief over his eyes, and tightly knotted it behind.

"There," said the ruffian, laughing coarsely, "that's to keep your ghost from knowing the way up, when we have let it out of your skin. It won't know where to come, if it wants to haunt us, my lad. Get on."

"Hallo!" croaked a hoarse voice. "Got him at last. Ha, ha, ha! I say, Si Slocum, my gentle lamb, I'm the butcher up at our place. You'll be handed over to me. I owe you more than one, so look out."

By the conversation that ensued, Si knew that they had overtaken another party; and so it was; for Jake Bledsoe had four men under his orders, and they were slowly making their way towards the mountains, with Kate Townsend, when the main body came up.

Si Slocum learned all this, for his ears were attent to pick up every word; while as to the precaution of binding his eyes, he laughed at it; for though it might hinder him from discovering the lair of the scoundrels, should he once be free, it would not hinder him in his escape; for he knew that the place in the mountains was due north of Randan Gulch, and the sun by day, and the moon by night, would enable him to take the right direction.

The ascent was very toilsome, he could feel, and it was longer than he had expected. The party, too, seemed to wind in and out a great deal; while over and over again he was half-dragged through narrow openings, and hauled up shelves of rock, which gave him a pretty good notion of the kind of way they were travelling—all of which he stored up in his mind as he thought of escape.

Suddenly, a peculiar hollow echo smote his ears; there was a dank, heavy feeling in the air, and blindfolded as he was, he knew that they must have entered either a tunnel or some cavern in the rocks.

And still they journeyed on, to his great surprise; for though he believed that Vasquez's band had some small cave high up in the mountains, he expected their place would be more of a camp, whereas it was evidently a cavern of wide extent.

"There," said Coyote Tobe, snatching off his bandage, "I don't think you'll persuade your ghost to find its way up here, my boy."

Si looked round, and saw that he had evidently come out of a narrow passage into a spacious cavern,

whose rough floor and sides were illuminated by a hole some ten yards away.

It was but a small opening, some four feet across and three high; but through it Si could see the glorious sunshine bathing a wide panorama of the country to the south, the mountain by his ruined ranch being visible; and he immediately came to the right conclusion—namely, that this hole was in the fall of a precipice, quite unapproachable by man, while the entrance to the cavern was by the opposite side.

Here, then, was a stronghold in which Vasquez's band could set a thousand men at defiance, even if the lair were discovered; for it would be protected by nature on the window side, while the entry could easily be barricaded and defended by the scoundrels within.

As Si found his eyes grow more accustomed to the light, he was astonished at the extent of the cavern, and the way in which it seemed to open out into other chambers; but directly after, his attention was taken up by the motions of four of the ruffians, who, under the direction of Vasquez, bore in the inanimate figure of Kate Townsend, who was laid upon a rough mattress, near a kind of brazier in which charcoal was burning.

"Let her lie there—she'll soon come to," said Vasquez, roughly. "No need of bonds for her. Now, then, friend Si Slocum," he said, "here is a pleasant ranch for you. Bring some of the toughest thongs you've got, my lads," he continued.

And some of his followers fetched some thin strips of raw hide, with which, most unmercifully, Si was bound to a rough pine stick, which had evidently been wedged into a crevice in the roof, and then forced into an upright position, so as to act partly as a pillar to support the rock above, and partly for a stand upon whose short, jagged remains of boughs, guns, pistols, and belts could be hung.

"There," laughed Vasquez, as he felt the knots, and the way in which the thongs indented wrists, arms, ankles, and the flesh above the knees—"there, Si, my friend, that's pretty tight. You'll be more comfortable presently, when the heat of your body makes the raw hide thongs dry and stiffen. They'll grow tighter—much tighter—and cut nearly to the bone."

"Then," he continued, "you can hang there, with your legs numb and cold, and see me enjoy my cigarette and my whisky, and dally with pretty little Miss Kate here. Ah, how things come about, don't they? Who'd have thought that you two would be accepting my hospitality up here? Little Kate, too, who wouldn't be my wife, but has come up here to be my mistress."

He laughed heartily; and Si felt—like Samson of old—a great longing to drag down the pillar to which he was bound, so that the roof might fall upon this, his enemy, and crush him. Si was willing to die at his side, so that this might be; and he felt, in his heart, that it would be better for poor Kate that this should also be her fate, for then she would be free from the horrible fate that was in store for her.

But the cavern was nature's building, and had Si been able to drag down the pillar, no roof would

have fallen; whereas he could only hang to it impotently, with the stagnating blood in his veins seeming to throb and strain till the pain was agonizing.

He did not even murmur, though, but waited patiently for what he hoped would come—freedom; shuddering, though, with rage as he saw Vasquez bend over Kate, who, happily, lay there quite insensible.

Soon afterwards, Vasquez followed the example of some dozen and a half of his men, who had been upon the expedition—threw himself upon his rough couch of heath and brush, and fell fast asleep.

Si looked round, to see that one fellow was at the entrance, evidently on guard; and this showed him that the other openings he saw only led farther into the cavern, possibly into inner chambers.

Escape, then, must be by the narrow opening where the man was on duty, or by the window-like aperture, which, his instinct told him, must look out on some awful precipice, death being the portion of him who attempted flight from it.

It was by thinking of these matters that he contrived to master the terrible pain that he was enduring. He was slightly wounded in two or three places; but the stings from cuts and bruises were as nothing compared to the pain that seemed to radiate from his bonds, every one of which seemed to be growing fast into a circle of fire, and burning more and more into his flesh.

Escape? Yes, and escape with Kate Townsend for his companion. That an attempt at rescue would be made, he did not doubt; but he could not help feeling that it would, from the strength of the place, result in failure; though he must contrive to elude the vigilance of his enemies if he could.

That day passed, and the next, during which Kate Townsend revived, and sat talking to him in the absence of Vasquez. And now it was that Si learned that, while the poor girl had been seated by her father in the pine grove, waiting for the return of Wallace, they had been suddenly surprised, and her father, who had made a gallant defence, was beaten down, and she had been dragged away, believing him killed.

"Pray, pray save me, Si!" she had said to him, again and again. "I shall die with horror if that man comes near me again."

"I'll give my life for you, my pretty darling," said Si; "but we must be cautious. Force is useless, situated as we are. If we get away, it must be by cunning; for I guess we are pretty well watched. You must contrive to get hold of a knife, and cut these thongs, then we may perhaps escape by that opening where the light comes in; though I calculate it's awful steep, or they would have some one to watch."

"But," sobbed the poor girl, "you don't know, Si. I am secured to the piece of rock here by a chain to my wrist."

And she held up one hand, to show him how impossible it was for her to come.

"If it was possible," groaned Si, "I should think it was a devil who did all this, and not a man."

"But you will try, Si—you will try? Oh, for the sake of your wife and child," sobbed Kate—"you will try and save me from this man?"

"I'll do it for the sake of my own manhood, my child," said Si, quietly; "and sooner than he should work his will, I'd catch hold of you, and leap out of that opening, risking everything."

"Yes, yes," sobbed Kate.

And then she uttered a shrill cry of horror; for, unperceived by them, Vasquez had been lying in the shadow just beyond Kate's couch.

"How glad you always seemed to see me, Kate," the wretch said, with a grim smile. "But there, you must drop all this romantic nonsense, and get well and strong, for you will be my wife in a couple of days or so."

"I'll die first," sobbed Kate.

"No, no—die afterwards; say, in a few months' time, and when I am tired of you," said Vasquez, brutally. "But don't talk nonsense, nor listen to the idiotic drivellings of that honest fool. I told you, my dear, that we should meet again, and that you would be mine. You would not have me in New York, with all the flourish of a grand wedding. You must have me here in the mountains without."

Kate crept away to the extent of her chain, looking at him with loathing.

"Ah, yes," he said, rolling up a cigarette, and laughing, "you would sooner die, of course—leap with Si Slocum from that opening. Well, I'll tell you something—that opening looks down upon a sheer fall of fifteen hundred feet into the cañon, and a leap from that means those beautiful little limbs and that soft, delicious form, that was only made to be caressed, dashed into a pulp of blood and bruised flesh. Ah, you shudder!"

Kate covered her face with her hands.

"Yes, that would be too horrible," he said, "would it not? Better be my little wife lovingly, and without compelling me to use force."

"I would sooner die," panted the girl.

While Si Slocum strained at the thongs till they cut into his flesh.

"No use, no use, my lad," said Vasquez, indolently—"the thongs are safe. No; look here, Kate. I offered you honourable marriage, and you refused me. I make you the offer again. I'm rich, and I will leave this life. We will go and lead a happy, peaceful life in Mexico, where your every wish shall be gratified—"

"No, no," cried Kate, indignantly.

"Hear me out," he said, coolly. "You know, I suppose, that you are entirely in my power, and escape is impossible? So, look here, I offer you honourable marriage, and I promise to be a good husband."

Si's breast rose and fell, as he listened intently.

"If you refuse," said Vasquez, "I shall make you my mistress by force, and you will lead a depraved, wretched life, going from bad to worse, till you are a wretched, degraded being. I give you your choice—love and marriage, or to be my mistress."

Si gave a sob of relief, for he had been in dread lest the poor girl's spirit should be broken, and she should succumb. But no—

"I tell you I will die sooner," cried Kate, angrily.

And now her true woman's spirit showed itself, and she met her persecutor with flashing eyes.

"Yes, Miss Kate," cried Si, "you are right; for every word he has uttered is a lie."

"Thank you, friend Si Slocum," said Vasquez, indolently; "but, look here, I am not always a liar. When I have revenge to obtain, I am truth itself. Now, look here, Kate Townsend, this man—Si Slocum has always been my enemy from the first, and I shall make my account straight with him, while I force you to beg and sue for my love."

"Don't listen to him, Miss Kate," said Si.

But Kate sat crouched upon the rocky floor, unable to withdraw her eyes, as Vasquez went on, his nostrils dilated and his eyes flashing as he spoke.

"I can be a devil if you drive me to it, and here is what I shall do. You see that honest dog? Well, I shall, unless you come to me on your knees tomorrow, and tell me you will be mine, I shall commence by putting out his eyes with a red-hot iron. Two hours later I shall cut off his ears. In another two hours, his nose. Then his tongue shall follow. In fact, my good child, I shall gratify my dislike to this scoundrel by cutting him to pieces for the crows and vultures outside that opening; and then, if you will hold out—well, you shall be mine all the same, hating, if you will not love."

He rose, bit the cigarette that he had rolled up, and coolly arranged the gay blanket he wore, before sauntering out of the cabin, and leaving the prisoners to themselves.

They sat listening to his retiring footsteps, and to the laughter and noise of his followers, who lived and slept in another of the rocky chambers nearer the entrance, and then Si was about to speak; but Jake Bledsoe entered, followed by another ruffian bearing a closed lantern.

Bledsoe grinned at the prisoners, and went on, with his companion, through the opening on the other side, to be followed directly after by a dozen more of the party, each bearing a keg, which at first sight Si took to be spirits, but a second glance showed him to be powder, probably intended for mining purposes.

A few minutes later all returned, Jake Bledsoe coming last with the lantern, which he held in Si Slocum's face, as he croaked—

"More powder, Si Slocum, more powder. We just had an interview with a miner's train, and now we've got powder enough to defend this place for a couple of years. Don't go lighting your cigars in the magazine there, Si, it might be dangerous."

With these words, and a brutal leer at Kate, he blew out his lantern, and went away.

"Oh, Si, is there no hope? Will he dare to hurt you?"

"As soon as smoke his cigarette, my dear," said Si, quietly; "but never mind me."

"But, Si, is there no hope?"

"None, my poor child, unless you can get your wrist free, and a few matches to blow this cursed nest into eternity!"

A YOUNG lady in the country, incensed at an egotistical young man from the city, said, "If the butcher could buy you at the price your acquaintances hold you at, and sell you at your own estimate, he could retire from business on what he'd make on that single speculation in veal."

A Canadian Adventure.

SOME ten years ago, my friend, Tom Adams, and I, having been on an artistic tour through Canada, resolved not to turn our faces southward again without adding elk-hunting to our experiences of sport. Our sketching during the few months we had been in the north had been pleasantly enlivened by a little sport; but we had not, so far, killed any large game. So, as that was the right time of year, we determined to brave the cold (twenty degrees of frost), and try our luck.

We were at the time staying in a little village near Moosequa. Here we had made the acquaintance of a Yankee of the name of Jaff, who, when he heard us planning our expedition, offered to accompany us. As he was an experienced sportsman, according to his own account, and used to the country, we accepted his offer gladly, and consulted him as to whom else to add to our party. The result was that we engaged a Canadian and two Indians to draw our provisions, which, with our tent and other necessaries, were packed into three light sledges.

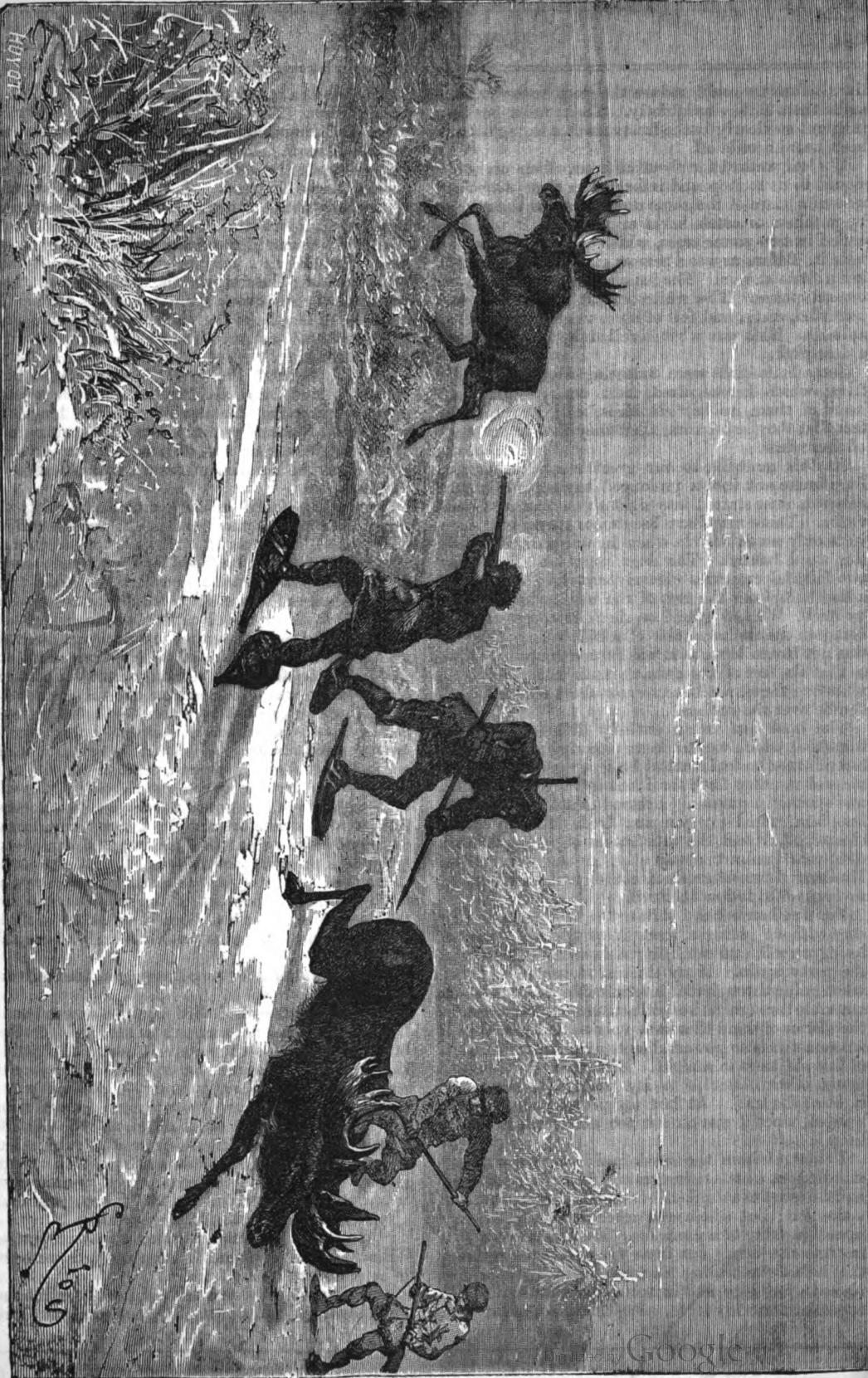
We had eight dogs between us, two of them belonging to myself. To resist the intense cold, we were, of course, warmly clad in furs—fur cap, fur greatcoat, and leggings. We carried guns slung on our backs, a hatchet and a knife at the side; and we had each a pair of snow-shoes, most awkward to wear. Thus equipped, and with provisions for three weeks, we set off. One of the Indians acted as guide.

For some five or six days we travelled over the wild, snow-covered country without adventure; sometimes following a river, at others penetrating the gloom of a thick fir wood. In the latter case we were exposed to a danger by no means to be despised, in the shape of small avalanches of snow which came sliding at intervals from the branches of some immense fir tree. At dusk we set up our tent in what shelter we could find, either under an overhanging rock, the spreading boughs of a tree, or a bank of snow. We shot plenty of small game to replenish our store of food, such as ducks, hares, and occasionally a small kind of deer. Once we came upon a colony of beavers, to whose ingeniously contrived habitations we brought destruction and desolation. I had not previously been aware that the beaver's flesh was good to eat; but I found out my mistake then. At another time and place I might have thought it oily, but in certain circumstances one ceases to be particular.

Fish, too, we caught in plenty, at that time, in the rivers that came in our way, by making holes in the ice through which to drop the line. These were chiefly salmon and trout.

At last, one grey, gloomy morning, before we civilized members of the party had made up our minds to stir out of the tent, our guide came in with the information that he had at last found traces of elk. This statement was confirmed by the Canadian, and in a minute all was excitement. The intense cold was almost forgotten, and our spirits rose at once. We were ready in a minute, our snow-shoes on, guns ready, and the dogs and Indians as excited and delighted as the rest of us. The latter packed up the tent and everything else in a shorter space of time than one could have believed possible. It was some little

HOPKIN.



ELK HUNTING IN THE SNOW.—(Page 234.)

time before we could reduce the dogs to order, and make them follow us quietly. Their noisy barking rang out so clearly in the frosty air that it might have been heard a mile off.

We had walked for about an hour, when our guide signed to us to stop, and informed us that just before us was a snare of the same description as those used by poachers to catch hares or rabbits. It was concealed in two young trees, which were bent down to hide it. Before us was a narrow glade, through which ran a little stream. The ice on this was broken in several places. The white carpet all around was trampled, dirty, and full of holes made by the feet of animals. This was what is called by the Canadians a deer-park.

Some little birds were fluttering about the maple trees, which I recognized, from descriptions I had heard of them, to be "elk birds," called so from the fact that they subsist on what they find in the wool of these deer.

At this moment, to our great mortification, the dogs broke out into a prolonged baying, and a herd of seven deer started into sight some distance in advance. There may have been more there, but there were only seven visible when in our pursuit we left the wood behind. The dogs were loosed, and my two faithful creatures cleverly contrived to separate a fine buck from the rest of the herd, which ran off by itself. We had gained on them, in consequence of being on the sheltered side of a hill, where the snow was not frozen hard, as it was in more exposed parts, so that the feet of the animals sank in at each step, retarding them, while our snow-shoes enabled us to shuffle over the surface.

The buck ran in an entirely different direction from that which we had been pursuing; so that in a few minutes he had reached firmer ground, distancing me and my dogs fast; for I had left my companions, and started in pursuit. I feared that I was going to lose him, raised my gun, and fired. As the smoke cleared off, I had the satisfaction of seeing the elk disappear, unhurt apparently, among some trees. However, I was determined not to give him up easily, so I set off to follow the trail.

For five hours did I follow the footprints of that stag without giving a thought to the risk I ran of losing myself, and not being able to find the rest of the party again. Many times I stumbled and fell, when going through that interminable wood. I had to scramble through bushes and across uprooted trees; for the storms of wind that sweep across that wild region are sometimes so powerful as to overthrow hundreds of fine old trees in a night. But, through these and many other obstacles to my progress, I never lost sight of the trail. At last my perseverance was rewarded, when I was almost too exhausted to go farther.

I emerged from the wood, and beheld my quarry standing on a little rising ground fifty yards off. Why he had come to a standstill I could not at the moment make out; but discovered afterwards that he was upon the verge of a precipice. He presented a firm front to the dogs; but from where I was I could see that he was trembling all over. I fired. The dogs rushed upon him, and in an instant all three had disappeared from my sight. I gained the summit of the

hillock, and saw, a hundred feet below me, the ice-bound river. The descent was broken by jutting crags and brambles, almost concealed by the soft mantle of snow. Neither dogs nor elk were visible. Far down on the other side of the river stretched another dense fir wood. The dark green branches, where they were left exposed, stood out in strong relief from the glare of white around. I turned about, but could see no sign of any human being on any side. But the view was glorious; the sky deep blue and cloudless; the sun, sinking in the far west, threw a warm red glow over all the landscape, tinting the snow-laden boughs of the wood through which I had come with rose-colour. The senses of sight and of touch were singularly at variance—so warm looked everything in the fading rays. A few stunted birch trees appeared here and there towards the western horizon, throwing shadows of immense length towards me. I cannot put into words the strange, wild beauty of the scene; but, once seen by any one who appreciates the beauties of nature, it could never be forgotten.

The colour faded quickly, and a shivering that seized me brought me back to the realities of my position. Where was I? Where were my friends? And where were my buck and my dogs? Lost, seemed to be the answer to each question. I looked again over the edge of the cliff on which I was standing. Could I get down there? After some consideration, I came to the conclusion that my neck was too valuable to risk for the sake of finding three dead animals; for the fall must certainly have killed them. My situation was rather serious, and there seemed to be only one course left open to me—that of trying to retrace my steps. Turning to do so, I was arrested by the rapid discharge of several guns in quick succession. Deafening, but most welcome noise!

The sound reverberated along the side of the cliff as though the echoes would never cease. A hundred feet below me were the rest of our party; and I could distinguish five or six elk—the result of the shots—lying dead or dying near them. They had followed the rest of the herd, just as I had followed my one victim, until, coming out of the wood I mentioned, the unfortunate deer had been brought up suddenly by the steep rock, exactly as mine had been by the precipice.

It was the most extraordinary coincidence I ever experienced.

When the echoes had died away, I shouted to my friends, but could not make them hear me. A slight breeze that was blowing seemed to carry the sound in the opposite direction. So at last I began the descent, and—how I hardly know—found my way to the bottom, without any more serious damage than a few scratches. Jaggs, the Yankee, and the Canadian were in anxious and earnest conversation; the Indians were finishing off those of the victims which were not already dead, and my approach was unnoticed. I was close to them before Adams turned round and saw me. He gave a thankful ejaculation.

"We were considering what to do about you, old fellow. Upon my word, I thought you were lost. Where did you spring from?"

I explained. As I was talking, a cold touch on my hand made me look down. There were my two faith-

ful hounds, whole and sound. I found the buck afterwards, dead, under the cliff.

We soon had some big fires burning, and meat put to cook, as we encamped under the cliff for that night.

It was some weeks before we were again in the civilized world, but we had no more such luck as on that day. Indeed, we endured a good many privations, and experienced so many hardships that neither my friend nor I have the smallest desire to go elk-hunting again.

The War Correspondent.

BY THE WANDERING JEW.

DON'T TRUST TO GOATSKINS.

IF this is delayed in transmission it is not my fault, for I worked very hard at making the idiotic telegraph clerk understand my wants. Turk, of course; and I kicked him till he'll never forget the quality of British tanned leather.

Rublu Pacha was looking on, and laughing, and threatened to have the fellow bastinadoed if he didn't take the kicking quietly, so he took it as quietly as he could.

"How is it the English clerk is not here to take the message?" I said, wrathfully.

"Allah only knows," said the Turk, bowing to the earth.

"That's a cracker," said the pacha, aside to me, "for I know too. The fellow couldn't get any pay, and he said he'd be something British if he worked for nothing; so he upset the acid tank, and went off on the drink."

"By the way," I said, "everybody's complaining about arrears of pay—engineers, soldiers, dockyard artificers, and no end of others. How is it?"

"No tin," said the pacha, quietly.

"But you seem satisfied. You get paid?" I said, interrogatively.

"Yes," he said, "I get paid."

And he closed one eye, softly.

"Well, how's that?"

"Fain larks," he said. "No putting it in the papers."

"Pon honour!" I ejaculated, laying my hand on my breast.

"Well, dear boy, you see I found out that it didn't pay to wait to be paid, so I always help myself."

"Help yourself?"

"Oh, yes, I always screw it out of somebody."

"Rather warm for poor somebody," I remarked.

"Well—yes—it is rather; but one must have one's little luxuries, and then one's harem isn't kept up for nothing."

"S'pose not," I said.

And by this time the Turkish telegraph clerk, having managed to collect himself, sent off my message; but from the cock of his eye, I feel sure he meant to serve me out over my next, so look out, and tell me the date when you get it. If, as Paddy says, you don't get it at all, never mind.

By the way, you must not make remarks about breach of faith, and that sort of nonsense. If I promise the pacha not to say a word it don't count, for he is only an unbeliever, and promises to him

don't matter. Besides, I promised you I'd send you every bit of information I could pick up, so I am bound to do it. Oath No. 1 counterbalances all the rest.

I left you in a muddle—that is, I left myself in a muddle—when I finished my last. A party of Redifs or regulars were investigating my portmanteau, and when I remonstrated with the butt end of a rifle, the scoundrels hauled out their crooked scimitars and came at me.

I'm not fond of fighting, and I'm not good at it; but sooner than have my clean linen sullied by the nasty hides of a set of unbelieving dogs of Turks, I was ready to do anything. What was more, those clean under-garments were starched and ironed by the fair hands of Rebecca herself; and how could I have looked her in the face, when she sternly asked me that important question, "What have you done with your sox?" (Let that stand as it is, please, and don't let the printer muddle it. I always spell feet coverings with an *x*, it's more classical and saves a letter—no mean advantage when I'm in a hurry. I don't see why *roo* should not be spelled the same.)

But to return to our *moutons*—I mean those cowardly sheep the Turks. Being about six to one, they were not alarmed.

I was.

However, that was no time for thinking; so drawing my pocket pistol, I discharged it at one, who caught it, cork and all, and went off to make himself comfortable with it under a date palm.

That made one less; and avoiding the cut made at me by one scimitar-armed ruffian, I gave another a shove, so that he caught it instead of me.

"Now, stoopid!" he roared, in Turkish.

And, in his rage, he spat at his *confrère*, when his head fell off, and rolled down the side of the hill.

I mention this trifling episode just to show you how keen the Turkish scimitars are; for beyond a sensation of coolness, the injured man had no notion that the pure Damascus steel had passed through his neck.

By the way, I ran down the hill afterwards, and picked up the turban and the head, cramming both in an empty shell case, with some salt, and you will receive it by P. and O. boat to Southampton, and South-Western Railway afterwards—carriage unpaid. You asked me to send you home some curiosities, so I thought I would begin at once. I would have sent you the Turk too, but he was too heavy, and I thought you could supply the rest from your own inner consciousness.

But to return to the fight. Two of my adversaries were thus disposed of, and another tripped over the portmanteau and fell at my feet, rolling over as he did so.

He was a long, lean, hungry-looking ruffian with plenty of room; so as my appetite was bad consequent on the heat, I thought I'd take a walk on an empty stomach, according to medical advice given to some one long ago.

I did so, and found it give great elasticity of motion; so I engaged his companions with the scimitar the prostrate ruffian tendered me in token of submission.

For a moment I thought I should have had a friendly hand to extend to you, but it was not quite detached,

through a notch in the blade I whirled round my head, and the ruffian ran off with it.

The last I engaged was a thorough blackguard—an Abyssinian, in fact, and I hardly knew how to have him, for he dodged about in the most marvellous way. Cutting at him was useless; giving point quite folly, for the fellow absolutely refused to accept it. His movements were like lightning, and I believe honestly that he would have cloven me from crown to chin—which is the correct, old-fashioned way of disposing of an enemy—when, being nearly exhausted, the idea occurred to me that I was wasting energy by cutting at the black-hued rascal, and that if I held my curved blade quite still he would immolate himself.

So I tried it, and as he came at me full rush I drew back my head to avoid his cut, held my own blade quite still, like a shimmering new moon, and all fell out as I expected—the wretch glided along the keen edge and fell in two pieces at my feet, grinning horribly.

"*Bismillah*," said a loud voice behind me.

And, turning sharply, to my great surprise there stood the commander-in-chief of the Turkish forces, side by side with Rublu Pacha.

"*Pesta rahat La Keum*," he continued. "Pacha, whose son is this?"

"*Rysee mala ran do tutissimus ibis*—it is a wise child who knows his own father," said the pacha. "The infidel is the representative of a great organ, oh, my lord."

"Then let him play," exclaimed the commander-in-chief. "But no; not now. It is time for work. Allah is great! and we must not refuse good hands to do his work, even if he is a western giaour."

"Thy servant is no giaour," I said, haughtily, "but a descendant of Eastern kings, to whom shekels were but as dust, and Tyrian dye a drug—thy servant is of the twelve tribes."

"Which?" said the great man. "But no matter," he continued, smiling urbaneley. "Pacha, give our valorous friend the command of seven battalions; we want such men as he. Hi, dog of a black skin, take this brave man's scimitar, and wipe it upon your turban before you die."

This was addressed to the upper half of the Abyssinian guard, who was dying in the indecent way to be expected of such a savage. For knowing, as he must have known, that his legs were cut off at the waist, and seeing them, as he did, straight before him, he would persist in trying to stand up; and he succeeded at last, looking excessively peculiar, and bearing a striking resemblance to the tombolas that the Italian boys sell in your streets.

So magnificent, however, is the training and discipline of the Turkish army, that, on receiving the order from the great chief, he took the scimitar from my hand, picked up his turban, and wiped clean the sullied blade, when a paroxysm of pain and fury seizing him, he made a furious blow at me with the weapon.

Fortunately he cut very low, as naturally followed from the fact that he only stood on his waist-belt; and, seeing the cut coming just in time, I laid my hands on the pacha's shoulders and "overed" him, as we used to serve a post at school, or the boys who laid us a back.

"Tuck in your tuppenny," I exclaimed as I went over.

And from the force of old associations down went the pacha's head, so that I cleared him without so much as knocking off his turban.

"Allah is great!" exclaimed the commander-in-chief. "The ways of the English are wonderful as their guns."

The pacha looked just a trifle ashamed; but, as he realised the escape I had had, and saw the black guard roll over dying and turning pale in the act, he nodded in a friendly way, and I picked up the scimitar.

"Throw that away," said the commander, pointing to the scimitar; and as he spoke he unbuckled his own—a priceless weapon before the diamonds in hilt and sheath had been picked out and replaced with paste, as I saw at a glance—and presented it to me.

"Wear this," he continued, "for my sake."

And then giving the pacha a peculiar look, he took me by the sleeve, and led me away.

"Coin is scarce just now, my friend," he said. "Can you do me a little bit of stiff—say at a month? Hard cash, you know, and your own discount."

I am compelled to send you these details, oh, *rédacteur-en-chef*, for war news is scarce. But you said you liked fighting. Besides, an incident like this shows you how wanting the Turkish army is in the sinews of war, when its head is compelled to seize an opportunity like the present to ask a comparative stranger for a supply.

He looked very disappointed when I told him that I had made a vow to negotiate no bills whatever for any one. He was ready to take what I liked, and to have it how I liked, as long as he could handle a little ready money.

"Ready, aye ready," he said, smiling, and his sonorous Turkish language flowed sweetly from his tongue; but I could not do it—you know why; and besides, I could not oblige one without the other.

I made matters pleasant, however, by proposing drinks at the canteen; and as, of course, a true believer could not touch strong liquors, we went in for Rosina and water, with a dash of British navy rum.

As a matter of course, I declined the command of the battalions, though I kept the sword. Imagine, however, my disgust on testing the scabbard of the scimitar and its hilt, in the seclusion of my tent at night, to find instead of their being gold, or even silver gilt, they were only copper electro, ornamented with very common crystals where they were not paste.

War news I have none to send you, for beyond firing a few shots across the river, nothing has been done. Everybody's plan has been to mass troops ready for the action that must come soon; and then! Well, then I don't think I shall tell you much about the fighting, but shall confine myself to the personal matters of the army, as being far more interesting to all who read your periodical.

Talk about periodicals, the periodical rains have been rather going it out here. You have seen it rain in England, but that's nothing. There it rains upright or down straight, when it don't slant. Here it comes every way at once, and splashes on to the ground so fiercely that it bounces up again, and makes the inside of your umbrella as wet as the out. That is why the

Turk ties the legs of his baggy trousers round his ankles.

On the eleventh we made a reconnaissance; and when I say we, I mean we, not the Turkish army. We were Rublu Pacha and myself.

It happened this way.

We had removed our camp to a place called Hourizah, which in plain English means the Field of Lovely Women, and this place being on the banks of the Danube, we could see the Russians swarming like bees on the other side.

"*Mashallah*," said Rublu to me, as we took our pipes and coffee outside in the cool of the evening—though that is a misnomer, for it was horribly hot. "I should like to know what the Muscovite giaours are going to do."

"Let's go and see, pacha," I said.

"I should like to, but how?"

"Here is my plan," I said. "Let us procure goatskins, inflate them, and then combine business and pleasure, the gathering of information and the evening bath."

Well, he said it would be pleasant, but how about our clothes?

"Put stones on them to keep them from blowing away."

"Blowing away!" he exclaimed. "Nothing short of the stones of the Great Pyramid would keep them down."

"Let a couple of Nubian slaves sit upon them, then—it will be a case of weight, as well as wait and watch."

"They come off so, dear boy," he said, confidentially. "These Nubiennes are not so black as they are painted; and the vain scoundrels considering the ebony hue the perfection of manly beauty, I can't keep a cake of blacking anyhow."

"But they surely don't."

"Don't? But they do, tremendously. However, we'll risk it."

So seeking a sheltered nook, goatskins were procured, joined together, inflated, and the ends carefully tied; and holding on by them for buoyancy, the pacha and I trusted ourselves to the stream, and paddled in the increasing darkness towards the farther shore.

"I say, pacha," I said, "there are no crocodiles here, are there?" for I fancied I felt something touch one of my legs.

"No, dear boy," he said, spitting out the blue water of the Danube—which, by the way, is of a rich-hued brown; "no crocodiles, but we have the *silurus glanis*. I dare say you know him—a wicked-looking eel, about ten feet long, and as thick as you are. He is called the *sly silurus*, from the artful way in which he takes his prey; but it's not very often an accident happens."

"I say," I whispered, "I think we've made enough reconnaissance for one night; hadn't we better go back? I fancy the wind's coming out of the goatskins, and if it does—"

"We shall have to sink to the bottom and walk out," said Rublu. "It is gravel."

"We must be nearly in the middle of the stream," I said—not nervously on my own account, but on his.

"Rather nearer the Roumanian shore, dear boy," he said. "What's that?"

"Good gracious!" I exclaimed, "how indiscreet. We shall be seen."

For at that moment a tiny arc of light was visible above us, and a spark dropped in the water close by, disappeared with the force of its fall, rose again, and burst into a vivid glare.

It was a blue light, cast by the foe to discover our whereabouts; and directly after, pop-pop-pop, skit-skit-skit, went the rifles of the Russians, the bullets splashing in the water.

Then something went "Buff!"

"Pacha," I cried, "they've hit the goatskins!"

And as I spoke, the wind began to escape with a whizz.

The Black Decoy.

"*I GUESS I never told you about that horse, did I?*" asked Major Maxwell, an old veteran of the American war, as he pointed out a large black horse that was quietly feeding in the pasture just across the road. "That is the famous Black Decoy; and he cost me an even thousand dollars, to say nothing of the vexation and the peril attending his purchase.

"I bought him out in the mountains. It was before the war. I had two good arms then, and this leg wasn't a stick. I was on escort duty. Something had happened to some of the waggons, and the train lay in camp a day for repairs. Nearly all the boys went out after buffaloes, but my horse was lame, so I remained in camp.

"There was only one companionable person left with me, and that was old Jacob Stockton. He was going out to Montana, to meet his daughter. He had been in Montana for years, leaving his child with friends in the East, and early in the spring he went to visit her. He found, however, that she had gone to visit him, so he hurried back, and by chance joined the train I was escorting.

"We had become very good friends; and at every opportunity I sought his company, and was always well repaid.

"On that day I found him stretched at full length under a tree, pulling away at his old black pipe. I followed his example, excepting the pipe, and was soon an interested listener to the old gentleman's tales of travel and adventure.

"In the midst of one of his most exciting narrations, he started unexpectedly to his feet, exclaiming—

"The Black Decoy, as sure as I live! I wonder what ill-luck is coming to us now."

"I quickly changed my recumbent position for one better suited for observation, and saw, coming towards camp, a stranger riding one horse and leading another.

"There was nothing remarkable about the stranger, nor the animal he rode; but the led horse was the most perfect thing in the way of horseflesh I ever saw. I was smitten at once. My poor bay, though he had served me faithfully for a year or more, looked like an old cart-horse by the side of this splendid black; and I decided at once that if this animal could be bought for money I would buy him.

"Don't do it, major," said old Jacob, although I had not spoken a word. "I had rather see you astride a Bengal tiger than that horse, with all its beauty."

"Beauty!" I exclaimed. "Why, Mr. Stockton, that word does not half express it. He is absolutely incomparable! I will give a round thousand for just that black horse, and consider it cheap, too!"

"Don't think of it, major!" cried the old man, grasping my arm as I rose to my feet. "I wouldn't ride nor own that horse for the whole of Montana—no, not if every stone were pure gold!"

"Pooh, my friend, you are wild! I'll ride him, and buy him too, if I can."

The old man shook his head.

"Major, if you know when you are well off, you'll not go nigh him."

"Your reasons?" said I, half-vexed at his superstitions.

"I have but one," he replied, solemnly. "If you mount that horse, you are no better than a dead man."

I laughed outright.

"You have forgotten the text, Jacob—"Death comes on a pale horse."

"Black or white, you will find it as I say, major."

By this time the new-comer was within speaking distance. I hailed him, and went out to where he stopped. It was no hard matter to trade with him; and in less than ten minutes I was leading the horse away, and the seller was riding off with a thousand dollars added to his pocket-money.

Anxious to try my new purchase, I saddled and bridled him, and mounted.

"Major! major! don't do it!"

"I had forgotten old Jacob; but there he stood, holding the horse by the bridle.

"Major, you will certainly ride to your death."

"I was too much excited to pay any attention to his words; and touching the horse lightly with my sharp Mexican spurs, I left the old man still talking to me.

"My beautiful black went charmingly. I never had an easier seat; and I never saw a horse that could get over the ground with less exertion. Twice one thousand dollars would not have taken him from me.

"At the start, I gave the horse free rein, and he took a northerly course toward the mountains. In this way I rode several miles; but the nearness of the sun to the zenith, and the admonitions of my inner man, reminded me that it was time to return. I accordingly drew rein; but instead of wheeling about, the horse broke into a gallop, nearly unseating me.

"I had hitherto prided myself on my command over anything of the horse kind; but that magnificent black took the conceit out of me. All that I could do or say made no impression on him; and I was forced at last to give up, and admit that I had found my match. It was very humiliating, I assure you; and there was Jacob Stockton's warning to think about. I was not alarmed, however; but I did find myself wondering whether the old man had not some good reasons for his belief. And I was

vexed, too. I could ride as far as the horse could carry me; but I felt that I had the right to choose the direction. There was my dinner, too—a nice juicy buffalo steak. Take it all in all, I was decidedly uncomfortable; and had it not been for a weary tramp back to our camping-ground, I should have shot the animal dead in his tracks.

"The way grew rougher as I drew nearer the mountains; but the horse did not abate his speed in the least. He plunged into a ravine—the dry bed of some mountain stream—like one accustomed to the way. On he dashed, and up, the path growing narrower and the rocky sides steeper.

"Higher and higher were the rocky walls, as we advanced, until they closed over our heads, shutting us into the gloom. Ten minutes of this darkness, and the horse emerged into an open space, lighted by the noonday sun. There he stopped as suddenly as he had started, and neighed loudly.

"Before I recovered from my surprise, a quick, sharp, well-known sound struck upon my ear; and looking in the direction from whence it appeared to come, I saw two men staring down at me—two as rough, villainous-looking creatures as ever encumbered the earth.

"Ah, my friend, I knew my peril then; and my thoughts went through my brain with wonderful rapidity. I had not a second to lose. Already two rifles were pointed at me. Whatever I did must be done instantly. There was but one chance—to stake a dumb brute's life against my own.

"I drew my revolver, and placed the cold muzzle to the ear of my treacherous captor.

"'My release, or the black imp's death!' I shouted.

"So soon as they comprehended my intentions, they disappeared; but I knew that it was only to gain a more advantageous position. I dared not leave the horse, however, for on him depended my safety; so I sat there, still holding my revolver ready for any emergency, and watching all points. Vigilant as I was, however, I was surprised. Without any warning, a light form leaped upon the saddle behind me, and a human voice uttered some strange word—some magical word, it seemed, for the horse, so motionless before, wheeled on the instant, and went dashing back through the path we had come.

"Then and there was a ride for life. The rocks seemed swarming with men; bullets flew about us like hail; and the clatter of hoofs over the hard stones came distinctly to our ears. I spared neither whip nor spur, and by strange good fortune we escaped the bullets, and reached the open plain. Then, for the first time, I ventured to look behind, and I saw a woman's face. I cannot describe my feelings—my surprise, my gratitude, my admiration, my love. For once I forgot that there was such a man as Major Guy Maxwell. Neither knowing nor caring who this stranger was—whether rich or poor, of high or low degree—I then and there gave her the noblest, truest, best love man ever gave to woman, nor thought perhaps it would never be returned. My life then was nothing, only so far as it was necessary for her safety. The yelling demons in pursuit were welcome to it if, by this means, she

could be saved. But there was no surety of that. Both would be saved or both lost.

"Our pursuers were gaining on us. Ever and anon a leaden messenger ploughed up the sand behind us, lessening our hope as they fell nearer and nearer. But we could only urge on the poor tired horse, and pray for deliverance.

"A mile or two ahead of us was a belt of timber. I had no recollection of passing it in the morning; but if we had lost our way, we could not turn back. If we could only reach the shelter of those trees, it would be better than remaining on the open plain, a target for half a score of rifles. But could we reach it? I had not the shadow of an idea that we could, for the horse was nearly spent. Yet I urged him on. He strained every muscle to the utmost, but those sinews of steel gave way at last. He staggered and fell, and I was just in time to save myself and my companion from being crushed beneath him.

"The timber was yet a hundred yards away, and the ruffians scarcely fifty behind. Why they didn't fire upon us I never knew, but I think they wished to spare my companion's life.

"I grasped the small, white hand of my companion in peril, and together we resumed the flight. But half the distance was covered, when one of the robbers galloped up to my side, and drew his sabre on me.

"Take that—"

"They were the last words he ever spoke. Puffs of white smoke appeared suddenly among the trees, and of the ten outlaws but three escaped.

"Well, there is but little more to tell. The timber which I had tried so hard to reach was our camping-ground, and it was the rifles of my own men that sent death and defeat into the robber ranks.

"Mr. Stockton stared at me as though I were a veritable ghost; but when I led forward the beautiful girl, it was my turn to be amazed.

"Minnie, my darling!" cried the old man.

"And I knew then who had shared my ride from the outlaws' stronghold.

"She had been taken prisoner only the day before. Failing to find her father, she was on her return, and the coach fell into the hands of the robbers. By chance she saw me, and conceived the bold plan for escape; but what magic word she used to induce the obdurate horse to turn back with us, I never knew, and she cannot tell.

"It came to me, and went again when I had no further use for it," is her reply when I ask her about it; so I am contented with the benefits received, and ask no questions.

"We resumed our way the next morning, Minnie accompanying us. The horse, too, I took with me, although it seemed utterly useless. He grew better, however; and there he is now, pretty well advanced in years, it is true, but still the cheapest horse ever bought. Smile away, if you like. I do not allude to the original investment—I paid enough for a share in the concern—but to the dividend received. Only one has been declared; yet I would not sell for ten thousand dollars. Let me show you. Minnie! Minnie! Oh, here you are. My wife, Minnie Stockton Maxwell—my DIVIDEND."

Zim Bowles and his Sentence.

THERE is more fun to the square foot in the new States and territories, the mountain and mining regions, than in any other parts of that noble country. And the newspaper man of the region has a knack of describing it in the deftest way.

In a late number of the *Denver News* is a sketch of one old Jim Barker, a well-known character of the mountains, who dwells at a sweet little hamlet called Blue Lizard Gulch.

The estimable Barker was only elected a justice of the peace for that section of El Paso County at last fall's election; and Mike Irving, a comrade of Jim's, was empowered to officiate as the executive officer of his court.

Jim's first case was on the complaint of Elder Slater, a travelling missionary, who had caused the arrest of Zimri Bowles, a resident of the foot-hills, upon a charge of stealing the elder's one-eyed mule. Zimri had been arrested by Irving, the constable, while in the act of easing the descent of the mule down Mad Gun Mountain, with his lariat fastened to the tail of the animal. The proof was conclusive. Accordingly the justice, after much legal perplexity of mind, proceeded to sentence Zimri to one year's confinement in the territorial penitentiary, which sentence he concluded as follows:—

"An' now, Zim, seein' as I'm about out of things to eat, an' as you will have the cost to pay, I reckon you'd better take a turn among the foot-hills with your rifle, an' see if you can't pick up some meat before night, as you can't start for the Big Canyon before mornin'."

Which marketing duty was performed by Zim bringing in one black-tail fawn and a rabbit within the time prescribed as a postscript to the sentence. On the following morning, the constable, mounted upon his broncho, accompanied by the prisoner astride of the mule, which the elder had kindly loaned him, started through the mountains for the penitentiary, where they arrived the second day out, their animals loaded with a deer, two antelopes, and a cinnamon bear, which they sold to the warden of the prison.

After dividing the money, the constable proceeded to hand over Zimri on the following mittimus, which is carefully preserved, and may be seen in possession of the warden:—

"TO THE HEDMAN OF THE COLORADO PRISON,
DOWN AT THE FOOT OF THE BIG CANYON ON
THE ARKANSAS.

"TAKE NOTICE—Zimri Boulds, who comes with this here, Stole Elder Slater's one-eyed mule, an it was all the mule the Elder had, an I sentenced Zim officially to one year in the Colorado prison, an hated to do it, seein as Zim once stood by me like a man when the Injuns had me in a tight place; an arter I sentenced Zim to one year for stealing the Elders' mule, my wife Lizzy, who is a kind o' tender-hearted critter, come and leaned her arm on my shoulder, and says she, 'Father, don't forget the time when Zim, with his rifle, covered our cabin from Granite mountain, an saved us from the Arraphoes, an Father I have heard you tell that after you was

wounded at San Creek, an helpless, it was Zimri's rifle that halted the Injun that was creeping in the grass to scalp you.' And then there was a tear splash fell upon the sentence, and I changed my mind suddenly, as follows: seein as the mule had but one eye, and wern't mor'n half a mule at that, you can let Zim go at about six months, an sooner if the Injuns shud get ugly; an, furthermore, if the Elder shud quiet down an give in any time, I will pardon Zim out instanter.—Witness my official hand and seal,

"JAMES BARKER, J.P.

"In Blue Lizard Gulch, El Paso County, in the Territory."

The warden, after informing the constable that he could not receive the prisoner upon the commitment offered, explained that he should have given a bond in the sum of about three hundred dollars to appear at the District Court. Accordingly the constable withdrew with his prisoner, when it was agreed between them that Zimri should give the constable his bond for the amount mentioned by the warden. This was accomplished by Zimri subscribing his name to an old replevin bond calling for three hundred dollars, found among the papers transmitted to the constable by his predecessor. Then, as the constable intended returning by the way of Pinon Mountain, to examine a bear den, where he had seen a couple of cubs playing last spring, he gave the bond to Zimri to take back to the justice. But Zimri, while on his return, traded the three hundred dollar bond to a mountain squatter, just in from Missouri, for a horse, saddle, and bridle; and the prisoner is believed to be at this time a dashing hunter on the plains.

The Egotist's Note-book.

THE *Athenaeum* announces the death, in his forty-seventh year, of Mr. S. O. Beeton, the publisher of many cheap and popular works. Although from an early age a sufferer from the disease of which he died, he displayed throughout his life immense energy and perseverance, writing as well as publishing several of the works he issued. In his literary labours he was much assisted by his wife, who died some years ago.

The torpedo boats are without sails, only carry coal enough for a very few hours' consumption at their top speed, and could carry a light gun on occasion. The diving-boat which blew up the *Housatonic* in the Confederate war was very dangerous to her own side, and killed twenty-four men in her trials. Nevertheless, there was no difficulty in finding a crew for her, and she succeeded in destroying her more bulky antagonist, but disappeared herself with all on board. Three years afterwards, she was found by divers beside the hull she had sunk, with the remains of the nine brave fellows by whom she was manned; and now she is preserved in the Museum at Washington.

Here is a little scene from the Agricultural Hall. The arena was cleared for the water jump. First to come at this was Mrs. Riddell, but the bay evidently knew what was before him, and refused to yield

to gentle persuasion; another attempt ended disastrously. The rider forced him up to the goose hurdles in spite of himself, and, taking these with his chest, he blundered through them, and fell heavily into the ditch. The most perfect composure and readiness of hand could not save him, and he lay struggling there, with Mrs. Riddell vainly trying to free herself from the saddle, but never relaxing her hold on the reins. As she rode with a three-crutch saddle, her knee got jammed so that it was impossible for the foot to be shaken clear of the stirrup. Before anybody got to her aid she had unbuckled the surcingle, but could do no more. Captain Riddell, in one of the balconies, rushed into the water, and, with the aid of Mr. Chaplin, managed to unfasten the girths. Then the lady was got out, and after resting a moment, which was one of anxious suspense to the onlookers, walked out without assistance, amid ringing applause. The wonder is that the poor woman was not killed. And we are the people who countenance these mad follies, and yet bully the bull-fighters! But the English always were consistent; and the water jump, at which so many poor creatures come to grief, amidst the roars of laughter of the spectators, is the great attraction of the show.

A gentleman was narrating to a lady friend, who was rather *distracte* in her manner, the death of a promising young barrister.

"He was," said he, "but twenty-five years of age, and he leaves two children."

"Ah," remarked the lady, "and they are not grown up, I suppose?"

A lady, notwithstanding that she was on the wrong side of forty, still kept up her pretensions to youth.

At a friend's house the other evening, she was found moping in a corner of the drawing-room.

"What's the matter with the poor creature?" inquired a compassionate lady.

"Oh," observed one of the company, "she has lost her lover."

"Lost her lover, poor soul! Was he very much older than herself?"

"On the contrary, he was quite a boy. But she was so devoted to him; loved him, indeed, like a—like a mother!"

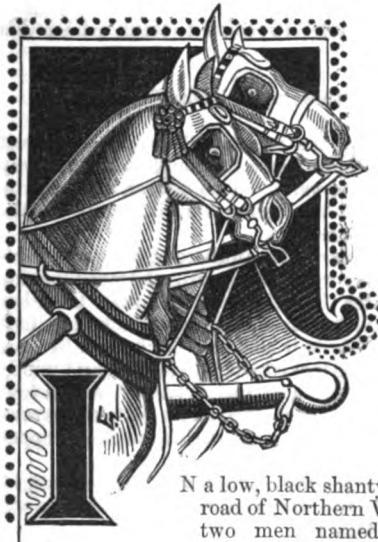
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The Compact.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.



N a low, black shanty, on a country road of Northern Vermont, lived two men named Cathcart — father and son. They cultivated

a good strip of clearing, worked at felling timber in the forests during the long, rigorous winters, and traded largely in horseflesh, often making trips across the line into Canada for this last-named purpose. They were men of decent reputation, living together quite alone, and at a good distance from any neighbour.

One gloomy night, a man, footsore and weary, with a pack on his back and a staff in his hand, was plodding over the wild wooded road whereon the shanty of the Cathcarts stood. Darkness had fallen an hour or two before, and with it a driving rain which soon soaked the traveller to his skin. The road was dreary and difficult, an eerie wind moaned in the tree tops, and, as the storm and darkness increased, he began to look anxiously around him for some place of shelter.

The man was a pedlar—a French Canadian by birth, named Lanard. In the pack on his back he carried jewellery, trinkets, and a considerable sum of money. As he went stumbling over the miry road, looking around for a resting-place, suddenly out of the rainy gloom before him twinkled a light.

It shone from the window of the Cathcarts' shanty, in a rain-beaten clearing, at the junction of two forest roads. A patch of ripened barley enclosed it on three sides, and there was a log outhouse, where horses were snorting and moving restlessly. The pedlar went up to the low door, and rapped with his staff.

"Who's there?" called a man's voice from within.

"A tired traveller," answered Lanard. "Open."

"Who are you, and what do you want?"

"I'm Lanard, the pedlar. I want a night's lodg-ing."

A murmur of voices ensued within, as if a consultation was in progress. Then the bar fell from the door—it swung back. Young Cathcart, a strapping, beetle-browed fellow, appeared on the threshold, with a tallow dip in his hand.

"Come in!"

Lanard entered, and found himself in a low room, with smoky rafters, and a log-fire burning on a sunken stone hearth. Old Cathcart, a man with a grey bullet-head and a heavy jaw, sat smoking a black clay pipe before the fire, and mending with an awl and some waxed ends a broken bridle.

"Sit down, pedlar, and make yerself to hum," he said, pushing a stool to the fire for his guest. "Lud, yes, ye can stay—we've plenty of room in the shanty. Drop yer pack in the corner thar, and Joe he'll git ye a good square supper."

Lanard threw off his pack, and drew up to the cheerful fire to warm his drenched body. He had travelled much in this region, and knew these men by reputation, even as they knew him.

"I've a bottle of sperrits in the cupboard that'll take the cold out o' ye," said old Cathcart, grinning in a slightly unpleasant manner. "It's not often that Joe and I have visitors, but when we does, we're bound to make 'em comfortable. I count it sorter lucky that ye drew up here. Taint allers safe for a man to travel arter dark with a pack crammed full o' watches and money, and sich-like."

"True," said Lanard; "I thought of that out there in the woods."

Young Joe cut a rasher of bacon, brought out of the cupboard corn-bread, potatoes, whiskey, and a pitcher filled with foaming cider. The pedlar was then invited to draw up, and make a meal. This he did, after which the three—father, son, and guest—gathered about the sunken hearth and the log-fire for a social evening.

As the whiskey and cider circulated freely, many foolish things were said—chiefly by the pedlar, who seems to have been a simple-minded man. He talked freely to the Cathcarts of his late sales, and the amount of money his pack contained. While he was thus babbling, the two repeatedly exchanged glances; but no word was spoken till Lanard, overcome with fatigue and the whiskey of his hosts, tumbled out of his chair, and fell dead asleep upon the stone hearth. Then the two men started up. They looked first at their prostrate guest, then at the pack in the corner, lastly at each other.

A kindred devil filled the eyes of each.

"Let's kill him!" whispered old Cathcart.

"Too risky—aint it!" grumbled the big, beetle-browed son.

"Pooh! Who's ever to know? There's a haul in that pack as won't slip into our hands again in a life-time, may be."

The two stood and stared at each other with guilty, conscious eyes. The same dark purpose was strong in the heart of each. Not a sound broke the horrible stillness, save the crackling of the brands on the hearth, and Lanard's deep breathing. At last, young Joe stalked to the cupboard, and brought out an axe with an edge as fine and sharp as a razor. The two then lifted the unconscious man, and, through a trap leading down to the cellar, they descended together, bearing him with them.

There, in the darkness and silence, Joe Cathcart took up the axe, and with one blow crushed in the pedlar's skull. Then, in a corner under the cellar stairs, the father and son dug a grave by the light of

a tallow-dip, and consigned to it the body of their victim. They then rummaged the pack, and divided its contents; destroyed every vestige of his visit, and, hideous with murder, sat themselves down to look at each other.

"Mind," hissed the old man, "we must keep dark about this, boy!"

His son nodded.

Then they were silent again. The rain beat against the window, the fire died low on the hearth at their feet.

"I've heard o' *dying* folks confessing," muttered the old man. "Well, I've nothing to say agin that. If I outlive ye, I'll make a clean breast of it when I go; if ye outlive me, ye shall do the same."

"All right!"

"It's a bargain, then?" said the old man.

"Just so," replied the young one.

"Give us yer hand on't!"

The two guilty hands met. Already a dark fear was dawning in both their faces; but they arose, concealed their ill-gotten booty, and retreated at once to bed. The compact was made. Let us see how it was kept.

Lanard, the pedlar, was missed, searched for, tracked to within a few miles of the Cathcarts' shanty, but never found. Foul play was, of course, suspected; but no breath of suspicion ever fell upon the real murderers. The disappearance of the hapless pedlar filled the little community with great disquiet for a while; then gradually people ceased to talk of him, and he was forgotten.

Five years later, old Cathcart, felling timber near his own shanty one day, was struck and instantly killed by a falling tree. After this event, young Joe, finding himself unequal, perhaps, to living alone with that ghastly secret under the cellar stairs, sold his stock, locked the door of the old house, and departed straightway from the clearing.

For some time he wandered about the country, gloomy, silent, and ill at ease. Ten years after Lanard's murder, he was driving a stage from Black Mountain to Hawk's Tavern, over as wild and hilly a route as can be found in all Vermont.

The first trip made by the new driver was on a pouring autumn night, when the bleak mountain summits were black with rain, and the stage went rumbling down the gullied spurs of the hill with locked wheels and steaming horses.

A solitary passenger occupied the vehicle—a fair, handsome student, on his way to Hawk's Tavern, to teach the village school. While the night, and the rain, and Cathcart had it all to themselves without, this young fellow enlivened the solitude inside the stage by a tranquil cigar and snatches of careless song, trolled out in a superb tenor voice.

"Curse him!" muttered Cathcart, on whose nerves the gay voice seemed to jar. "What does he mean by making such a racket?"

Martin Huss, however, looked to be a rather serious subject for enmity. He was big, broad-shouldered, and muscular as a Hercules. The new driver did not meddle with his solitary jollity. When the stage drove into the yard at Hawk's Tavern, the two alighted together.

"Going to stay here long?" growled Cathcart, look-

ing at a big portmanteau, the property of the passenger.

"It's quite probable," answered the pleasant, manly voice.

"So! you're the fellow come to teach school this winter, eh?"

"I am he."

"Ever been in these parts before?"

"Never."

At this moment the inn door flew open. A great sheet of warm light poured through, burning away the darkness of the yard. Two figures, attracted by the sound of the lumbering wheels, came to the threshold and peered out.

The first was Hawk, the innkeeper, jolly and rubicund. The other was a young girl, who stood looking over his shoulder, half shy, half curious. Over her shoulders tumbled a mass of brown-black hair, half out of curl. This hair she held back from her big brown eyes, as she looked out into the wet and windy night. Her face was a marvel of beauty, with a low, even forehead, a peachy skin, and a little ripe strawberry mouth. The two men outside the door stopped short, and stared at her.

"Come in," cried Hawk, cheerily. "A rough night, driver. Leave the brutes to the ostler. You're wet to the skin, I take it."

Cathcart did not move. He stood with his eyes fixed on the girl, in a long, unwinking stare. He looked dazed, helpless, utterly spellbound, as if she had stricken all sense and will out of him.

"Come along," said Huss, slapping him on the shoulder. "What's the matter with you?"

"That girl," gasped Cathcart, with dropping jaw, "who is she?"

"Hebe herself, I should say. I'll go in and find out."

Cathcart followed; but the beautiful apparition retreated straightway from the door, and disappeared. The new driver went to the bar, and fortified himself with a stiff glass of liquor. The new schoolmaster stood by the fire, and looked out through the open door, in a vain search for the peachy face, and loose dark hair. Presently, supper was announced, and the two followed Hawk into the dining-room of the inn, and there sat down together.

"Well," said the innkeeper, running an approving eye over the stalwart figure of Huss, "you'll suit, up thar at the schoolhouse. You've got muscle about you—you have! Lord bless you! them unruly cusses nigh about killed the master; but they won't meddle with you—not they. Riquetta, bring in the tea."

A dimpled brown hand pushed a steaming cup towards Cathcart, and put down another on the cloth beside Huss.

"It's my daughter, Riquetta," said Hawk. "She'll tend school this winter. This 'ere is Mr. Huss, child—the new schoolmaster, from Montpelier. T'other one's the new stage-driver."

Riquetta curseyed, casting one shy look at Huss from under her dark lashes. Cathcart she did not notice. He, on the contrary, dropped knife and fork, and, leaning forward on the table, seemed literally to devour her with his eyes.

"Oh, don't go!" pleaded Huss, as he saw that she

was about to withdraw. "Tell me about the school, Miss Hawk. I am an utter stranger here. Wait, I beg you. You are the first of my pupils that I have seen."

She yielded, with a timid grace. When supper was over, the innkeeper went back to the bar. Cathcart stalked sullenly after, and the young schoolmaster and the mountain beauty were left to chat at their leisure over the blazing fire.

When he had fairly won her out of her first shyness, Martin Huss saw that she was a perfect wild rose of a girl, fresh, spirited, and a bit of a coquette withal.

"You will find us very ignorant, no doubt," she said, with a little laugh; "our schools are short among the mountains, and few of us can go during the summer months. I study at home, and yet I am ashamed to tell you how little I know."

He begged her to bring him her books. With frightful guile he lured her, under educational pretences, close up to his side.

"I hope," she said, with a little ambitious sigh—"I hope you will teach me much this winter?"

"I will," he answered.

Now, it chanced that the windows of the room in which the two sat opened upon a weather-beaten verandah. A sudden noise from this quarter presently arrested the attention of Riquetta. She turned and looked; then drew away from Huss, with a faint scream.

"See!" she cried—"who is that?"

Huss, following the direction of her hand, saw, standing out there in the wet and dark, close up to one of the windows, a man, with his wild, jealous, threatening face glued to the pane, staring fixedly at the little innocent scene in there by the open fire.

"Who is it? Why, the stage-driver, to be sure," answered Huss; and he rose in wrath, and stalked to the window. "Hallo!" he cried, sharply, "what do you want?"

"Come out here," answered Cathcart, sullenly, "and I'll tell you."

Riquetta disappeared through a door. Huss opened the window.

"Now," said Cathcart, eyeing him wickedly, "I'll tell you what, schoolmaster—it's likely to be a drawn battle 'twixt you and me. That's the first girl I ever saw that I was taken with—all at short notice, too. You'd better keep out of my way. I warn you."

He looked perfectly diabolical as he stood glowering from under his beetle brows at Huss. In fact, the murderous element, which had lain dormant for ten years in the man, had on this night awokened, all rampant.

Huss reddened. His blue eyes flashed.

"You insolent boor!" he cried.

And, before the other was aware, he seized him by the shoulders, pitched him over the railing of the verandah, and, stepping coolly back into the dining-room, closed the window as if nothing had happened.

The following morning, Riquetta, all alone in the inn-yard, encountered the new stage-driver on his way to the stables.

The girl stood leaning on the gate, her dark hair blowing, her cheek like a rose, feeding a flock of pigeons that came fluttering down at her call from

the weather-beaten roof above. She held her ruffled apron gathered up at the corners, brimming with grain. In the rosy dawn just breaking above the mountaintops, with those purple wings fanning the air around her, the little mountain girl made a picture fit to delight more cultivated eyes than those of Joe Cathcart. Absorbed with the pigeons, she did not see the big, beetle-browed man till he was close at her side. Then she drew back, and looked at him in something like positive aversion.

"Riquetta," he began—"that's what they call you, ain't it? I'm driver on the line, as you know. I've got a place up north'ard, too—house and clearing. That's not so bad for a fellow not yet thirty, eh?"

She had no idea of his meaning. She regarded him in silent amaze.

"Cathcart's my name," he blundered on—"Joe Cathcart. I hope you like it."

"Not particularly," answered Riquetta, dropping her grain, and beginning to retreat from the gate.

"Well, I'm sorry for that, because I've made up my mind that it's a good name for you."

"For me!" cried Riquetta. "What do you mean?"

He drew closer to her.

"Come, now! What does any man mean when he offers a woman his name?"

The astounded girl recoiled as he approached her.

"Go away!" she cried. "You are drunk, or beside yourself. I don't want you to look at me, or speak to me. Go away!"

"Well, I like girls of spirit. It strikes you as too sudden, does it? I just wanted you to know I had made up my mind about you. If anybody thinks of stepping between us, he'd better consider the matter well afore he tries it."

Riquetta was in a blaze of anger, and, at the same time, she was shivering with fear. Something about the man impressed her with a strange sense of danger and terror. She turned and ran, palpitating and breathless, to the inn, leaving him standing, dark and sullen, in the rosy morning.

The Domestic Confessions of Mrs. Chignal.

THE FOURTH—JANE AND HER MOTHER.

JANE gave a sob and a gulp, and jumped up; for her mamma came in behind Rachel—I mean her mother, but I am so accustomed to write the word mamma, that it crept in there; though, of course, nothing could be more absurd than to call the person who now bounced into the room by so fashionable a title.

She was evidently a very strong woman, as well as a strong-minded woman; for she stood there, with her faded shawl drawn tightly round her shoulders, and a gouty umbrella in her hand, looking from one to the other, and finishing by giving a sort of puff of defiance, and saying, as she ended by fixing one eye on me and the other on dear Alfred—

"Now, then, what's my gal been a-doing of?"

The dreadful woman, who looked as raw and bony as a mammoth, squinted so frightfully, in the spreading-outwards fashion, that it was impossible to tell whom she was addressing. I thought she

was looking at Alfred, and he, poor boy, thought she was looking at me; so we neither of us spoke.

"Now, then," she exclaimed, in the most disrespectful way—"I aint going to stop here all night. What's my gal been a-doing?"

"Don't ask me," said Alfred, crossly—"ask her mistress."

"Which I wasn't a-arstin' of you at all, sir," said the horrible woman—"I was a-arstin' of the missis."

"Then why the devil don't you look at her," said Alfred, "and not stare at me?"

"Ah," thought I to myself, "what a blessing it is to me that dear aunt is not here!"

"I wasn't a-lookin' at you at all, sir," said Jane's mother; "but if I did, I s'pose as a cat may look at a king."

"Then say what you want to say, and be off," said Alfred, turning his back.

"What I says I says to the missis, sir; and that is, what's my poor gal been a-doing of?"

"Your daughter," I said, feeling that I was called upon to speak—"your daughter, Mrs. Grutty, has been behaving very badly, and I am obliged to dismiss her at once."

"Lor, have she now, mum?" said Jane's mother. "And pray what have she been a-doing of?"

"I cannot find time now to enumerate all her offences," I said with dignity; "it must suffice for you that she's to leave."

"Lor bless and save us, Mrs. High and Mighty!" said the horrible vulgar woman; "and pray, do you think, mum, as there aint hundreds of better places for my gal than yours?"

"I am not going to discuss that," I said; "but I shall certainly not give her a character."

"That for your character, mum," said the odious thing, snapping her fingers; "she can have the best of characters from plenty of places."

"The girl is, I am sorry to say, terribly careless, forgetful, and neglectful; and, more than all, she is not honest."

"Who says my gal aint honest?" she shrieked out, stepping towards me; and I shrank away all of a shiver.

But here the policeman interfered.

"Now, then," he said, in his rough way, that always sounds as if a policeman's throat was lined with blue cloth, like his uniform—"now, then, none of that ere."

"Let her say what she means, then," shouted the virago, putting her arms akimbo, letting fall her umbrella, and threatening to pull off her bonnet, and let down her back hair.

"Well, she means to have your lovely daughter's box searched—that's what she means," said the policeman.

"I should just like to see her do it, that's all," said the woman. "Ugh! I haven't patience with such ways. Jane," she continued, turning to her daughter, who was now rubbing her nose till it was red as fire, "Jane, is that there your box as them people's begun to rifle?"

"Yes, and they've dragged the cord all to rags," said Jane, with a sob.

"Do it up agen," said her mother, pointing to it, fiercely. "Search your box indeed!"

Jane made a hasty step towards the box, and had got hold of one end of the cord, when the policeman interposed.

"You wants to see what's inside first, don't you, mum?"

I felt that he was looking at me, but I was too nervous to reply; for I was looking hard at Alfred, who seemed to be rather enjoying the whole affair; and if it had been left to me, I should have said—

"Take the box away, and let me see no more of you."

However, Alfred spoke up.

"Yes, of course, policeman. The girl's been making free, I suppose, with what don't belong to her."

"I won't have that there box opened," said Mrs. Grutty, defiantly. "My gal couldn't take what don't belong to her—it aint in her natur. Jane, you set down on that box."

Miss Jane made a rush to execute her mother's wishes; but the policeman took her by the arm, and gave her a swing away.

"Now, then," he said, "none of that nonsense. Where's the key?"

"Don't give it him, Jane," said her mother.

And her face was like fire, as she looked from one to the other; and then, before she could be prevented, she stepped to the box, and flopped herself down upon it, and folded her arms upon her breast.

"Well," said the policeman, "if you very much prefer that sorter thing, Mrs. Grutty, we can all go on to the station—it won't be the first time. But my advice to you is that you gets off that box."

Mrs. Grutty turned pale in patches, which showed all amidst the red; for, as I afterwards heard, she had been more than once under the lash of the law for little weaknesses, regarding odds and ends of value which had found their way into her possession when she had been out charing.

"You see," said the policeman, "it might be as bad for you as for your gal, and it's a pity to make people wild as is going to prosecute."

Mrs. Grutty got off the box, and began to wipe one corner of her right eye with the right hand corner of her shawl, afterwards wiping the corner of her left eye with the corner of her shawl to match.

"Which I'm sure I'd be the merry lass person to go agen the law, or anybody else; on'y one don't like to see one's own flesh and blood trampled down; and mind, if any thing's got by mistake in my Jane's box, I'm puseckly sure as there aint nobody in the world as would be more sorry than me, without it was my Jane herself."

"Well, then, let's have the key," said the policeman.

"Give the policeman the key, Jane, my gal," said Mrs. Grutty, affectionately, "and don't be afraid, my dear—you're among people as will be sure to do you justice; and I'm sorry as you can't agree with such a good mistress as you've had, and as I know she's been; on'y I was a bit put out at hearing you was a-going."

Jane put her hands behind her, like a cross child, and gave her shoulders a shake. Then she got hold of a bonnet string, and put one end in her mouth, to tug at it as she held it in her teeth.

"Give the gentleman the key, Jane, dear," said her mother, soothingly.

"Ow, ow, hoo, hoo, hoo!" cried Jane, bursting into a horrible howl, as she thrust her hand into her pocket, and slowly drew out the key, which she gave to the policeman, ending by going down all of a heap on to the carpet, and bellowing dismally.

"Don't cry, my dear," said Mrs. Gratty, and then she patted her lovable daughter on the back, and winked at me, as if to take me into her confidence. "Don't cry, Jane, your missus isn't very angry with you, and she says she'll forgive you if you'll say you're sorry, and won't do so any more."

"I'm sure I said no such thing," I said, firing up; for I began to feel my courage returning to me now.

"No, mum, you didn't say so out loud," said the horrible woman, winking at me again; "but you give me a look, as much as to say, 'I only want to frecken her a bit, Missus Gratty, that's all.'"

"Well, you are a wunner, Mrs. Gratty," said the policeman, laughing.

And Alfred was foolish enough to burst into a chuckle.

This, of course, gave the dreadful woman confidence, and she went on talking at me.

"Nothing can't be more proper than for a missus to talk to a gal as aint done right; but I don't hold with calling in the perlice for nothing at all. As for my Jane, as I said afore, in the hurry of packing up she may have put in one or two things by mistake—as mistakes will 'appen in the best reg'lated fammerlies, even in yours, mum; but, of course, when she found it out, she would have brought anything as she had found back again."

All this time Miss Jane was howling dismally, and her eyes were puffed up and closed, as if she had been fighting.

"Now, young woman," said the policeman, "you'd better come and turn the things over yourself."

"Let me do it, young man," said Mrs. Gratty, with dignity; "and perhaps Missus Chignell will come and look on."

So Mrs. Gratty went down on her knees before her daughter's box, and began to unpack it; while Alfred, the policeman, and I looked on, to the tune of Jane's sobs and howls.

The first garment lifted out brought with it something that fell with a rap on the floor.

"Why, that's my card case that I lost," said Alfred, picking it up.

"Put it on the table, sir," said the policeman. "P'raps there'll be something else."

"Ow!" went Jane. And Mrs. Gratty pulled out a dress.

"I suppose that aint yours, mum?" she said, triumphantly.

"No," I said, "of course not."

And she was putting it down.

"Hold hard a minute," said the policeman—"let's see what's in that pocket."

He made a snatch at the dress, and fished out a new packet of violet powder and a piece of scented soap.

"Well, no one can't swear to them," said Mrs. Gratty.

"I don't know about that," said the policeman, making a dart at Mrs. Gratty's hand, as she tried to smuggle a something white under a black under-garment. "What's that ere?" he said, holding up a piece of lace.

"My Maltese berthe," I said, catching hold of it. "Oh, you wicked girl!"

"Ow—ow!" sobbed Jane.

"Why, lor, mum," said Mrs. Gratty, "that there might ha' stuck to her dress unbeknownst."

"Well, the dress certainly does look greasy and sticky enough," said Alfred, chuckling.

"There, mum!" says the wicked woman—"even your own good gentleman says as it might."

"There, hold your tongue, and get on," said Alfred, roughly.

And in five minutes they had got quite a pile of things: handkerchiefs and stockings of mine, cuffs of Alfred's, and a whole fresh bottle of scent, and one of toilet vinegar off my dressing table—things which I had never missed, and perhaps never should have missed. Then they brought out odd things of the baby's—single socks, and frocks, and underthings, that could not have been of the slightest use to her; till there was quite a heap on the table, and the exclamations of that horrible woman were, as Alfred said, as good as a play.

For, no matter how barefaced it seemed, no matter how self-evident was the theft, she kept on going into a state of wonder as to how the things could have got there; ending, at last, as I will tell you farther on.

As for Jane, I turned round to look angrily at her, but she was not recognizable; her eyes were completely swelled up, and her nose had changed its hue to an intense red.

We had got down to the bottom of the box, and our last find had been a couple of our finest damask table napkins, and nothing was left but some dirty stockings in one corner.

"There," said Alfred, "that will do."

Mrs. Gratty was just going to bundle the things back, but the constable was too sharp.

"Hold hard a minute," said the man, "we may as well finish our job. Let's have these here out—there may be a false bottom to the box."

"I never did see such a suspicious set as you perlice are," said Mrs. Gratty, indignantly.

"Spouse not," said the constable, drily. "You see, Mrs. Gratty, 'tis our nature to, as well as our edication—stockings with holes, stockings all holes, stockings as ought to be washed, and stockings as—as—stockings as—stock— Hallo! what's this here?"

As he spoke, he had been opening out one dirty stocking, and now, holding it by the toe with one hand, by the leg with the other, he shook it; and if out didn't tumble, with a musical jingle, the breast-pin I gave to dear Alfred on his birthday, my pearl brooch, and dear baby's gold coral and bells.

"Well, I think it was jest as well to get them there two or three little things out," said the policeman, grinning. "Now, I wonder however them things could have managed to get to the bottom of that there box. There, leave her alone!"

He said these last words, for Mrs. Gratty had

waddled along on her knees to her sweet daughter, and before any one could interfere, she had begun to box her ears right and left, in the most outrageous way.

"Oh, you good-for-nothing—bad—evil—wicked girl!" she cried. "How dare you take things as don't b'long to you, and bring your poor, honest, hard-working mother to disgrace! Oh, if I only get you home, won't I—"

Here she got hold of poor Jane's head by the ears, and was going to hammer it upon the floor; but the majesty of the law stepped in and stopped her.

"There, that'll do," said the policeman. "She'll be punished enough."

Jane lay and howled dismally.

"Get up, and go down on your knees this blessed minute, and ask pardon of your dear, loving mistress, and tell her that you wish you may die if ever you'll do such a thing again! Ugh, you wicked wretch! wherever could you have learned such ways?"

Jane howled louder, and got upon her knees.

"To think of you, as ought to be so grateful to such a good mistress, going and behaving as you've been 'having. Oh, I'll half kill you!"

"Now, then, Mrs. Grutty," said the policeman, "come and put these things in the box; and you'd better take it off, and yourself too. I suppose, sir, you won't prosecute her as receiver?"

"Oh, the good lor' a mussy!" said Mrs. Grutty, excitedly. "The dear, good gentleman's never going to think of persecuting a poor, lone widow woman and her daughter! Jane—Jane, I say, why don't you ask your kind missus to forgive you?"

"Of course, you'll press the charge, sir?" said the policeman to Alfred.

"Well, I suppose we'd better," he said. "I don't see any fun in being robbed in this fashion. What do you say, dear?"

He looked at me, and I was very, very cross; but the very idea of having that girl, who had often kissed and fondled my darling baby, dragged off to prison, with chains on her wrists and ankles, and then for her to be shut up in a horrible wet cell or dungeon, beneath the moat, or whatever it might be, and all swarming with toads and frogs, lizards and rats, was more than I could bear; and I turned to dear Alfred and laid my hand upon his shoulder, as I whispered—

"Oh, Alfred, dear, we've got the things back—don't let's send her to prison."

"'Fraid she'd be hung for it," he said, in a whisper.

"Surely, oh, Alfred, dear, they don't hang now for such a crime as this?"

"H'm—no," he said, enjoying my horror. "I don't think they'd hang her for this; but it's a bad case."

"Now, then," said the policeman to Jane.

For Mrs. Grutty had bundled all the things into the box, corded it hastily, and lugged it into the passage.

He went up to Jane, and laid his hand upon her shoulder.

"Now, then, my gal," he said, "it won't be for life."

She leaped up, and ran to me, sobbing and crying, and holding tightly by my dress.

"Oh, 'm! pray 'm, please 'm, don't let them take me away this time."

"But you've been a very wicked girl, Jane," I said, meaning to forgive her.

"And you deserve all you get," said Alfred, sharply.

"You've always been well treated here, Jane," I said; "and you repaid my kindness with ingratitude."

"Oh 'm! please 'm, but I'll never do so any more. I did steal the things."

"Yes, we know that," said Alfred, "you thieving cat, you."

Jane looked daggers at him, but she clung to me.

"The old woman's hooked it, sir," said the policeman just then, as a bang came at the front door.

"Box and all?" said Alfred.

"Yes, sir, box and all. She's carrying it like a man, on her shoulder. Now, my gal," he continued, turning to Jane, "are you ready?"

"Oh, 'm, pray, 'm, don't let them take me to prison," half shrieked the poor girl.

"I'm afraid I must, Jane," I said, severely.

Though, of course, I did mean to let her go; when if the horrible girl didn't blast my happiness in an instant by the words she next said; for at that instant Alfred exclaimed—

"Come, policeman, you'd better take her off."

"No, no, no!" cried the girl, getting behind me.

And then, with her lips to my ears, she said, in a hissing whisper—

"Oh, 'm, don't let them take me, 'm, and I'll tell you all about master and Miss Wilkins!"

Forks.

HERE is an old—and perhaps not very polite—saying, that "fingers were made before forks;" and that they must of necessity have been used by our forefathers to convey food to the mouth before the invention of these useful articles is evident from the fact that forks were not introduced into England before the reign of James I.

The English derived this piece of refinement from the Italians. The fact appears from the following curious extracts from a book entitled "Coryat's Crudities; or, Five Months' Travels in France, Savoy, Italy, and High Germany." This book was published in 1611.

"I observed a custom," said the traveller, "in all those Italian cities through which I passed, that is not used in any other country that I saw in my travels, neither do I think that any other nation of Christendom doth use it, only Italy. The Italians do always at their meals use a little *forke* when they cut their meat. For while with their knife, which they hold in one hand, they cut the meat out of the dish, they fasten their fork, which they hold with the other hand, on the same dish. So that whosoever he be that, sitting in the company of others at meals, should unadvisedly touch the dish of meat with the fingers, he will give occasion for offence unto the company, insomuch that for his error against good

manners he shall be brow-beaten, if not reprimanded in words. This is because the Italians cannot by any means endure to have their meat touched with fingers, seeing all men's fingers are not alike clean."

And we cannot find fault with the Italians for their desire to be particular in this regard.

The use of the fork was at first much ridiculed in England as an effeminate piece of finery. In one of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, your "fork-carrying" traveller is spoken of with much contempt, and Ben Jonson has joined in the laugh against them in his "Devil's an Ass," act v., scene 4:—

"Have I deserved this from you two, for all my pains to get you each a patent?"

"For what?"

"Upon my project of the forks."

"Forks! What be they?"

"The laudable use of forks, brought into use as they are in Italy, to the sparing o' napkins."

The word "fork" occurs only once or twice in the Bible—once in the Pentateuch, where mention is made of "flesh forks," evidently invented to take the meat out of the pot. The other instance is in an account of the riches of Solomon's Temple, where, singularly enough, the Vulgate has the word "furca," which the English translation renders by "spoon."

The Greeks, with all their elegance, were ignorant of the use of forks in eating. Even Lucullus was not acquainted with the luxury. A two-branched instrument or two was found at Herculaneum, but it is clear that they were not used at table in any period of the Roman history.

The first instance that history records of the use of forks was at the table of John, the good Duke of Burgundy, and he had only two. At that period the loaves were made round; they were cut in slices, which were piled by the side of the carver or *écuyer franchant* (cutting squire). He had a pointed carving-knife, and a skewer of drawn silver or gold, which he stuck into the joint. Having cut off a slice, he took it on the point of the knife and placed it on a slice of bread, which was served to the guest.

A leg or haunch of mutton had always a piece of paper wrapped round the shank, which the carver took hold of with the left hand when he carved the joint. In England, one hundred years ago, a silver tube or holder for placing on the end of the shank was considered a necessary part of the appointments of a genteel table.

It was customary at one time in France, when a gentleman was invited to dinner, for him to send his servant with his knife, fork, and spoon; or, if he had no servant, he carried them with him in his pocket.

The peasantry of the Tyrol, and of parts of Germany and Switzerland, generally carry a case in their pockets containing a knife, fork, and spoon.

In our day, the manner of using the fork is considered a sign of the good or ill breeding of the person using it. Germans generally grasp it with a clenched fist. It is not necessary, however, in these days of style and elegance, to describe how or in what manner this very useful article should be handled, as most persons know what the rules of polite society are in this regard.

The War Correspondent.

BY THE WANDERING JEW.

THIRD LETTER.

NOW, to the thoughtless and unfeeling, I have no doubt our position on the goatskins may seem very funny, and they will probably smile.

To all such I say, Come and float in the middle of the blue Danube on an inflated goatskin; let a bullet strike it so that the wind escapes, and then see if you can call up the ghost of a smile.

As the correspondent of a Yankee paper here said, when he knew of the incident, "I guess it would take all the cackle out of a laughing hyena!"

I accurately described the noise made as the bullet struck the goatskin when I wrote it "Buff!" but I said nothing about the mournful whisper that was kept up afterwards, as the air hurried out, like a prisoner from its confinement; and, to make matters worse, even when I forced the orifice under water, it did not stop the escape, for then there ensued a horrible gurgling noise like that of a bubble-bubble-pike. And all the while the blue light blazed more brightly, and the Russian marksmen on the Roumanian shore kept on practising at us.

I feel convinced that, in the obscurity, they took us for a couple of torpedoes. Certainly Rublu Pacha, with his bald crown, resembled the Whitehead torpedo in everything except speed.

"What's to be done?" I said—"I shall get my note-book wet."

"Blister your note-book!" he exclaimed, pettishly. "Look at me! Here's a pretty position for a pacha! Here, I say, be quick. *Be chesm*, on my head be it. Put out that light; you are nearest. It's quite indecent of them, throwing such things, when we are in this condition. I wouldn't care even if I'd got my fez."

"I wish I'd got it for an extinguisher; I might put out the light then. I'm not going to put it out with my fingers."

Buff! Fiz-z-z-z-z!

"There's another windbag gone," muttered the pacha. "I say, Solomon, this is growing painful. What shall we do?"

"Do!" I exclaimed, savagely—"anything, anybody. I'd do my own father, to get out of such a position."

"But we shall be out of breath—I mean wind—directly, dear boy; and then—"

"We must sink to the bottom, and walk out, as you advised," I said, with a snarl.

Piff—piff! pop—pop!

"I wish I was behind those scoundrels," growled the pacha. "Oh, goodness gracious!—I mean, oh, Allah!—my goatskins are sinking."

A fresh blue light dropped near us, and began to blaze.

"Oh, I say, don't," I said, piteously. "It isn't decent."

But the light blazed all the same; and I felt my goatskins collapsing to such an extent that, saving one which remained about as big as an ordinary swimming bladder, I had nothing left to support me. That scrap, however, fortunately sufficed; and

soon after, the blue lights becoming extinct, the stream carried us away beyond the shooting range of the hungry Muscovites who had been making practice at us.

"How are you getting on?" I said, at last.

"Awful bad!" said Rublu, who was puffing and blowing like a grampus as he swam beside me; and, being very fat, there was not the slightest prospect of his sinking. "I say, lend me a skin."

Of course he meant an inflated skin; but, beyond the scrap I mentioned, I had nothing; so I told him. At the same time, I kept that piece religiously out of sight beneath the water, while, feeling now very cold, I made use of the empty goatskins to clothe myself—not that they made me any warmer, only a trifle less cold.

"I say, what's to be done?" said Rublu, just as I tore away a couple of the wet, slippery goatskins that were of no further service.

Rublu was below me, and the skins therefore floated to him; but I never expected such an outcry as that which followed; for, a few moments later, he yelled out—

"Murder!"

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"The silurus—the silurus!" he exclaimed.

"Well, don't make such a noise," I said—"they'll begin firing again."

"But—oh, lor a-mussey! Oh, Allah, il Allah! The beast has got round my legs, and is dragging me down. Oh, dear! oh, dear! I'll go back home, and become a good Christian once more, if I only get safe ashore again. Oh, Solomon, help! help!"

"You called me Jew. You spat upon my beard. You—"

"I didn't, Solomon, 'pon my word I didn't. I never thought—"

"Hath not a Jew eyes—ears? If you tickle me, do I not laugh?"

"Oh, Solomon, I wouldn't think of doing such a thing—'pon my word I wouldn't," he moaned, faintly. "This thing's dragging me down, and I shall be suffocated directly. Oh, dear! oh, dear! I'm a good Christian once more, and I renounce all Mahomet's teachings; and if I only get once ashore, I'll—"

Guggle, guggle, guggle!

My blood ran cold, for it was evident from the sounds that poor Rublu had gone under, and I could not help him in the least; but directly after, up he came again, spitting and swearing in Turkish horribly.

"I say, Solomon, that was too bad," he cried; "you did that on purpose."

"Did what on purpose?"

"Why, let loose those goatskins, to get round my legs. I thought it was one of those great eely things. This isn't a time for larking."

"Larking?" I said, "I wasn't larking. I was only thinking of saving my life."

"Yo, hoy, there!" cried a voice in Turkish; and then the same voice said, as if to some one else, "Two fish torpedoes."

"We aint," I roared, desperately. "We scorn the action. My name's Solomon, special cor.; and this is Rublu Pacha."

There was a clicking of rifles being cocked, when Rublu roared out—

"Don't shoot, we'll come down. Here, shy us a rope."

Of course, this was all in good Turkish, and it was just in time; for the Russians were sending blue lights out into the stream, and peppering with rifle bullets, one of which, sooner or later, must have found its billet. But before any mischief was done, a rope was thrown us, and we both caught it, and were hauled on board a steam launch, which was on the look-out and fishing for Russian torpedoes.

"See that they have no concealed arms about them," said the Turk in command of the launch.

"Don't do anything of the kind," exclaimed my friend, shivering so that he could hardly speak, "but lend us a couple of cloaks, for goodness' sake—I mean in the name of Allah. Confound the water, how cold it is! Here, Solomon, lay hold, and put the hood over your head."

He handed me a thick Albanian capote, into which I got quickly; and, pulling the hood over my head, I went and squatted by the side of Rublu on the steam boiler, and felt more happy than I can express.

I make no virtue of all this, for it was truly necessity; but I mention it all to show you how truly energetic I am in your service.

Meanwhile, the firing became so warm that the Turkish lieutenant in command of the launch got upon the substitute for a bridge, and made a motion with his hand.

"Go on ahead—heasy!" said a small voice close beside us; and then, directly after, "Hease'er—stop'er—turn'er astarn."

"What's the matter now?" said Rublu.

Bomb!

There was a flash, a puff of smoke, and a tremendous report just in front; and we found that we had nearly run into a Russian gunboat, which had fired at us.

"Left fakement—artful!" sang out the boy to the engineer.

The little steam launch began to progress ahead again, the screw panting and throbbing gently as we curved off to the left.

"What's your little game, lieutenant?" said Rublu, softly.

"Well, pacha," said the commander, coming to our side, "we're going to get right ahead of the gunboat, and float down with the stream."

"Well," said Rublu, "what then? Why, you'll be blown out of the water."

"I guess we sha'n't," said the lieutenant, whose name was Mustapha, but who spoke with a decidedly Yankee accent; "but maybe some one else will be."

"Why, you don't mean to say you've got a torpedo with you?"

"But I kinder reckon I do. A reg'lar Bulgarian atrocity."

"Where is it?" said Rublu.

"Your friend the noosepaper man's sitting on it."

"I'm not," I said, indignantly. "This is the steam boiler—it's quite hot."

"Guess it is, and it's dynamite," he said, coolly. "If it gets much hotter, it'll bust. Biler! why, you



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didn't think there'd be room for you when the pacha was on it, did you?"

By this time I had got off the great barrel-shaped torpedo, and the lieutenant felt it.

"Yes," he said, "it is a little too warm. Two on you shove it overboard to cool. Gently, mind."

To my great joy the diabolical instrument of war was gently dropped over the side and cooled; when a long spar was attached to it, and we carried it along in front of our bows.

"I say," I whispered to the lieutenant, "I thought you were a Turk."

"Well, so I am," he said, laughing. "Even you might have known that, by my fez and slippers."

"I say, lieutenant," said Rublu then, with a shiver, "got any hair restorer about you?"

"Waal, yes," the lieutenant said, with a chuckle. "I don't know what we should do without. Eh, Noosepapers?"

He took off his fez, and passed his hand over his bald head, and then, unlocking a locker, he took out a bottle and glass.

"Now, then, pacha," he said, "hold out yer hand."

The pacha did as he was told, and Lieutenant Mustapha poured a little of the bottle's contents therein, with the result that Rublu rubbed it round as if it had been hair oil, and then passed it over his bald head. The lieutenant did the same; and on some being poured into my hands, I, of course, imitated the others, though my head is not bald, only a little thin on the crown, as a fellow at King Henry the Eighth's Cardinal's saloon always makes a point of assuring me.

The next moment, Mustapha poured out a glass of the hair restorer, and Rublu tipped it down as if he were used to it, afterwards drawing a long breath.

I followed suit, and felt better directly. Then Mustapha anointed himself internally, and put away the bottle and glass.

"That'll make your hair come on like mustard and cress," he said. "Don't you feel a kind of internal warmth, like powdered flannel?"

"Yes," I said, most decidedly.

"That's the roots moving," he said. "Isn't it, pacha?"

"Of course," said Rublu.

"I didn't know the roots of the hair were so low down," I said, winking.

"Oh, but they are," he said; "they strike very deep. Now, then, my lads, business."

It was quite time; for, below us in the distance, we could just make out the hull of a large vessel.

An order was given in a whisper to the boy, who whispered—

"Please 'er! stop 'er!"

The engine was slowed down, and ceased to throb. A grapnel anchor was dropped over the stern, and we swung to it till we were within about twenty yards, when we stopped; and after using his night glass, Mustapha had the torpedo got ready.

A thin wire was attached to it, and then it was detached from the spar, and hung between a couple of small empty barrels, joined by a spar; the result being that the torpedo was supported about eight feet below the surface, and, directed by ropes, it was

allowed to go down with the swift stream, till it rested against the great black hull below us.

"Now, then," whispered Mustapha, "I'm going to send the spark." And he made ready to attach the wire to a little battery which hung from his shoulders. "Hold tight, everybody."

Bomb! came the explosion of a big gun, and a shot whistled over our heads.

"They see us," said Rublu.

And as he spoke, another shot whistled by us, followed by a shell, which went by with a regular screech.

"Look sharp," said Rublu, "or we shall be sunk; but fire it easy."

"All right," cried Mustapha, who was busy with his wire; "but the darned thing won't go off. That's right, at last. Now, then, be ready with the engine. Go on astern!"

"Go on astern," said the small boy.

The screw began to throb. As it did so, the electric spark ran along the wire, the torpedo exploded, blowing the great hull out of the water just as her guns were flashing. There was a frightful heave—a wave washed over us, and something heavy fell between Rublu and myself.

But the launch was already gaining speed; the man at the stern was ready to heave up the grapnel as we passed over it, stern foremost and rocking heavily, though we were soon out of danger.

"I reckon that's neatly done," said Lieutenant Mustapha, coiling up the wire that had been blown free by the explosion. "That woke up some of them. Rublu, old man, mind you put in a word for me as to promotion."

"I will, my son, I will," said the pacha.

Bomb! went a big gun just abreast of us; and the shot splashed up the water, and went over us.

"Helm hard down—full steam on!" cried Mustapha. "There's another of the scoundrels out. I wish I'd another torpedo for him; but there'd be no chance to-night. We'll run into port now."

The gunboat kept on firing at us, and one shot tore my hood, so close did it go to my ear; but we escaped injury, and were fast leaving the Russian gunboat behind, when a voice at my elbow exclaimed—

"Avast! What boat's this?"

"Eh, who spoke?" said Rublu.

Then he hopped off the warm boiler, like a pea from a shovel; for he saw what I too was now able to distinguish in the coming dawn.

"I did," said the same voice.

And now Mustapha saw that it was a head speaking, that had fallen on board when the torpedo exploded and I had felt something come on deck.

The head was covered by a fez, with a magnificent blue tassel and golden star and crescent. It stood on the top of the boiler, on its neck, rolling its eyes, and looking round; while the fierce black moustachios stood out at right angles over the grinning lips.

"Well, what do you say?" exclaimed Mustapha, who if he was afraid would not show it.

"I said, avast—what boat's this?" exclaimed the head.

"The *Swift Redif*," replied Mustapha, "torpedo

launch of H.I.M. the Sultan of all the Turkeys, commanded by Lieutenant Mustapha, true believer, formerly of Nancyville, U.S. Will that suit you, old nobody?"

"Did you fire that torpedo?" said the head.
"I guess I did," said Mustapha.

Fortunately for him, the head was getting out of breath, so that its words did not reach the crew.

"Do you know what ship it was?"

"Guess it was the rusty Muscovite, *Peter the Great*," said Mustapha.

"It was the *Golden Horn*."

"Blow it!" exclaimed Mustapha.

"Our biggest Turkish monitor," continued the head, faintly; "and you've blown up the wrong boat."

As the head said this, it rolled over on one side, and shut its eyes, when, with wonderful promptness, Mustapha snatched it off the boiler, and dropped it over the side.

"Phew!" he whistled, softly. "I say, Noose-papers, you'd better not report that. At least, if you must, put it down to a Russian launch, or I shall get the sack in the Bosphorus, instead of being made a Bey. Eh, Rublu?"

"Safe," said Rublu.

"Well, you won't blow me, will you?"

"Never," said the pacha; "and Solomon here will keep it dark."

Of course I did; and the papers all had it that the monitor was blown up by a couple of Russian launches; and two lieutenants were decorated and kissed by the Grand Duke for the exploit.

You, sir, alone have the real truth, which is a profound secret, for the sake of the Yankee lieutenant, who, of course, could not help his mistake.

We escaped the Russian gunboat that we ought to have blown up; and running from Scylla we fell into—but of that anon.

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER XLII.—THE REVENGE OF VASQUEZ.

THE next morning dawned at last, with Si Slocum's agony grown insupportable. He knew that now, even if he were set free, he could not make a movement, and that it must be days before his limbs recovered their strength. For, as Vasquez had said, the thongs as they dried had tightened, and cut into his flesh, causing him the most acute torture, till he had felt as if death would be a relief.

Food had been placed to his lips, but he could not touch it. Water, however, he had drunk with avidity; and now he hung there, supported by his bonds, with his eyes fixed upon poor Kate, who had been half delirious during the night, but had now awokened to a full sense of their terrible position.

They had seen none of the band since the men carried through the powder barrels, and with a kind of stunned apathy waited for what was to come.

Neither spoke, save that, in all his agony, Si begged Kate to be firm, and think only of herself.

"Never mind me, Miss Kate," he said, sadly; "they can't hurt me more than they have. Let

him do his worst; it will give time for the gulch people to come with Mr. Wallace to your help. I'm a broken man now, so it don't matter."

"Oh!" gasped Kate, "it is too horrible! But you must not be tortured for me."

"I shall die for you, Miss Kate—a man must die some time; and you, when you get free, will be kind to and look after my poor wife and child."

"Oh, Si!" groaned Kate, "it is too horrible to believe. Vasquez will never be such a wretch. I will throw myself on my knees, and pray him to spare you."

"Pray to the stones, miss, they will only be cold and damp. There is no mercy in that devil. He killed father, mother, tried to make me slay my own wife; and now he will kill me. Well, only that I want time for you, I wish it was over."

"But, Si, can you speak of dying like that?" sobbed Kate.

"I couldn't, miss, when I was well and strong; now I have been suffering horrible tortures, and I am tired, and want to go to sleep—the long, restful sleep."

Just then, Jake Bledsoe came in, and lit a fire in the rough brazier, blowing the charcoal till it glowed, when he placed in it a small bar of iron.

"There, Si Slocum," he said, with a hoarse croak, "that's for you. The captain thinks you shoot too well, so he's going to put out your eyes. I don't suppose it will hurt much."

He left the fire glowing, and went away; while Kate sat looking at the bar with a kind of fascination, and Si smiled sadly at the thought of his wife and child.

Neither spoke, and in a few minutes Jake Bledsoe, who seemed half intoxicated, returned with a small grindstone and a keen-looking knife.

He put down the grindstone and knife, and then going close up to Si, he stared him full in the face.

"There, my lad, these are for you. You've no idea how the captain took it to heart that you shot and knived so many of his men. He's going to talk to you for it by and by; and then you'll see what a humorous, pleasant kind of fellow he is. That knife's for you, same as the hot iron is; and I'm going to give that knife as keen an edge as I can."

Si did not speak to him, but Kate threw herself back, sobbing, and feeling at times half delirious; for the scene was too horrible to bear even now, and she conjured up others connected with the torture of Si Slocum that were perfectly awful.

She could not help admiring Si's resolution, and the calmness with which he faced the fiend who seemed to gloat over what was to take place.

A terrible tempest was raging in the poor girl's breast. She felt at one moment as if she were about to murder the brave fellow before her; and directly after it seemed to her to be all impossible, and nothing but a threat on the part of Vasquez, who could never be so demoniacal as to treat his prisoner as he threatened to do.

Meanwhile, Jake Bledsoe went coolly on with his preparations, in the dim twilight of the cave; his bloated face, when he bent over the brazier and blew up the charcoal till it glowed, looking perfectly hideous.

Then going to the little portable grindstone, one evidently stolen from some poor settler's waggon, and kept by the gang for sharpening bowie knives, he turned the handle with one hand, while he held the blade of the knife to it with the other, keeping up a running comment as he sharpened the knife.

"Fine bit of steel this," he said. "Say, friend Si Slocum, the captain could shave you with it, I guess."

Si made no reply; and the only sound to be heard was an occasional sob from Kate, or the gritting, harsh noise of the knife on the stone.

"Say, it's hard work, turning with one hand, and holding the knife with the other. You can't come and turn yourself, cunnil, or I could get on faster. There, that's enough of that."

He left off turning the handle, and took to whetting the knife now, by rubbing it on the stone, trying its edge, with an evil grin on his countenance, from time to time; and at last, catching Kate's horrified gaze, he made believe to draw it across his throat, laughing boisterously as he saw Kate crouch down trembling, and cover her face with her hands.

"Ha! ha! ha!" he laughed. "Why, that's nothing to what is going to take place, little one. Wait till the captain comes. Oh, here he is."

Vasquez came softly in at that moment; and there was something cat-like and tigerish in his movements as he crept up to Kate, and, kneeling down beside her, tried to take one of her hands.

She shrank from him with loathing.

"Very well," he said, quietly; "then friend Si Slocum must suffer for your coldness, my haughty little queen."

Then, crossing to where Si stood, or rather hung to the tree branch, he carefully examined his bonds, seeming perfectly satisfied when he had done, and stood facing the trapper.

"So your day has come," he snarled, placing his face close to that of the prisoner. "I will not annoy the lady by repeating the process of my pleasant little revenge, but you have only an hour to wait, Si Slocum, before the first taste of my revenge; so, till I have had my breakfast, good-bye. Miss Kate, I salute you."

He threw his gaudy scarf over his shoulder, and moved towards the opening, where he turned.

"Jake, keep a strict watch over your prisoners, that they don't get together planning escapes. They are dangerous people, and they might unloose themselves, and jump fifteen hundred feet with safety, unless they preferred to walk over the men in our dining-hall."

He turned again, and left the place, seeming like some black shadow as he passed away.

"Ha! ha! ha!" croaked Bledsoe, hoarse with drink—"he's a droll one, is the captain. One can't help liking him. Dangerous, are you? Well, never mind, you shall have plenty of care taken of you, my dears. There, I think that knife will do now. It will cut so well, Si Slocum, that you won't feel it, my boy."

He laid the keen point down on the wood frame of the grindstone, and went to the fire, where he poked the charcoal and blew it again into a fierce glow, in which the iron bar could be seen getting fast to a white heat.

In a kind of despair Kate crawled, deathly sick as she felt, towards the grindstone, and tried to reach the knife; what for, she hardly knew, unless to put an end to her wretched existence if driven to despair by Vasquez.

Strain as she would, though, she could not reach it by a foot; and, throwing herself down, she felt ready to dash her head against the rocky floor.

Suddenly a thought struck her, and she strove to put it into effect. Could she shake the frame of the grindstone so that the knife should fall?

Alas, no, it was impossible; and she lay gasping for breath, while Jake Bledsoe went on muttering to himself as he blew on the fire, till the bar of iron, which he took out, and flourished in Si Slocum's face, was at a white heat.

"There, all's ready for yew, Si; and the captain ought to be very glad he's got such a follower as I am. Snakes, but I must have some more Bourbon, my throat's dry as a sand-hill. Don't you two run away while I'm gone."

He went, muttering and grumbling, out of the cavern, and Kate and Si were alone.

"Si, Si," she moaned, "this is too horrible!"

"Make a try to get your wrist loose, Miss Kate," said Si, hoarsely, for the impending torture had seemed to rouse him from his stupor. "Get loose and reach that knife, you can then set me free."

Kate strained and dragged till the blood trickled from her wrist, but it was all in vain; and she fell back at last, with a moan.

Si uttered a suppressed cry; for now that it had come to the last, he awoke to the fact that the love of life was very strong in him, and he shook the pillar, as he made tremendous efforts to escape, but only to create new torture in his enfeebled frame.

"It is no use, girl," he said, bitterly. "I have done all that man could do, save one thing—and that is to die. Heaven send you help, Miss Kate! As for me, I'd die a thousand deaths sooner than live at such a ransom as he proposes. Gain time, my child, gain time, and all will yet be well. Remember Rewth, though, and my boy, and tell them I died like a man. Now, kneel down and pray."

Kate obeyed him, sobbing the while.

"Pray for me, Miss Kate, that I may have the strength to bear that devil's torture without a groan; for if I could do this, I should die happy. Quick, they are coming."

A wail burst from Kate's lips, while Si again made a desperate effort to free himself, but in vain.

Voices were heard approaching; and then suddenly, as if from just below the opening, there came a rustling noise, followed by a whistle of a low, peculiar nature, one which was imitated by Si Slocum, who then hung there, panting as if his heart must burst its bonds.

At the same moment, the voice of Vasquez was heard without, speaking to Jake Bledsoe.

CHAPTER XLIII.—CLOSING THE DEN.

ALL this time the miners of Randan Gulch had not been idle, but to a man had declared their determination to take no rest until the gang of Vasquez was "rubbed out."

Incentives in plenty they had; for, besides the

outrages committed on the Townsend and Slocum families, an emigrant train had been robbed, several poor wretches killed; and, within a few hours, a convoy of store goods and powder, intended for the gulch settlement, had been set upon and plundered.

Sympathy ran strong for Ruth Slocum and Mr. Townsend. The rough miners, too, used to go and see poor Wallace, listen to the ravings of his delirium, and end by slapping their revolvers, and swearing vengeance on the rowdy band.

The consequence was that mining operations were set aside for the time being, and a strong, well-armed party went up the mountain to attack Vasquez's stronghold.

They tried very hard to get to the place, but found the way so intricate that, after being harassed terribly by their concealed enemy, they were glad to fall back, with the loss of five good men, shot down without a chance of reply.

"That will sicken 'em," said Coyote Tobe, as he saw the miners go back.

But Tobe was wrong—it only exasperated them the more; and, after returning to the gulch, the miners took oath not to give up till the task was done.

They had made one discovery, and that was of the existence of a great cave, or series of caverns, only to be approached through narrow rifts and passages, to face which meant terrible loss of life.

It was resolved, then, to try by cunning and patience to do that which force seemed unable to achieve; and returning well supplied with provisions and blankets for camping out, the sturdy band once more approached the entrance to the cave, exchanging shots with the scouts who were out, and driving them back with such energy, that they succeeded in tracing them right to the very entrance, high up in a rift, concealed by a chaos of blocks of stones that had fallen from the peaks higher up.

So favourable was the spot for a hiding-place, that it might have been passed hundreds of times, and would never have been discovered, but for the hot pursuit of one of the scouts by a miner, who followed him so closely that he saw the ruffian disappear round a great mass of granite, and stopped puzzled, till, boldly going close up and looking in, he found that there was just room for a man to pass, and that behind it was a jagged split in the rock, which seemed to zigzag inwards.

At the same moment there was a puff of smoke, a flash, and the miner fell back, with a shot through his shoulder.

"Fetch him in, quick!" roared a voice.

And it was evident that the ruffians dreaded the miner's escape, as he knew where the entrance was.

But they had a sturdy fellow to deal with, as he had proved himself, by boldly going up to the cavern entry; and as his enemies came out he retreated, covering himself with his revolver, and bringing down two of the foremost of his pursuers.

He was weak, though, with his wound; and, pressed as he was by the enemy, he stumbled and fell back, when, headed by Coyote Tobe, half a dozen of the gang made a rush at him—to receive, however, a scattered volley from some of the miners,

who had been attracted by the firing, and half only of Tobe's followers got away.

"They've gone," said the miners, returning panting from the pursuit, and securing two of the men, who were only wounded.

"Did you see where?" said the wounded miner.

"No," was the reply; "they dodged away amongst the rocks."

"Help me up," he said, "and I'll show you."

The result was that a rough breastwork of rocks was piled up in a spot that commanded the entrance; and here half a dozen or so of the miners held the gang shut up. For at the protrusion of a barrel from the hole, bullet after bullet spattered against the rock, and glanced in, so that what was formerly safety now proved to be danger to the gang; and it was determined to starve them into submission.

But the next day, after due consideration, it was thought that this might take time, and it would be better to bring the band, if possible, to terms of surrender as soon as possible, when, by hanging Vasquez and five of the worst characters, the rest might be scattered, glad to escape with their lives. The storekeeper then, aided by his friend of the bar, made the following suggestion, after an inspection of the place—

"It can easily be done," he said. "Double the number in the breastwork, so as to drive the rowdies back in case they break out, and so as to protect the workers; and let half a dozen of us climb up over the entrance, and loosen down the lumps of stone up there with crowbars. Why, in a couple of hours we can block them all in."

"But suppose there's another way out," said a miner.

"If there had been another way out, my lad, I guess we should have had some pills delivered by the skunks long before this," said the storekeeper.

"But who's to climb up there?" said another.

"I'm going, for one," said the storekeeper; "who's with me?"

There was no lack of volunteers. And so it fell about that, while Jake Bledsoe was busy sharpening the knife that was to cause Si Slocum's death, a little party of sturdy men climbed up above the entrance to the cave on the side nearest the gulch, and the first warning Vasquez's gang had of this new kind of assault was in the rattling down of block after block of stone, which, falling between the ruins that screened their portal, effectually blocked it up in a very short time to their great dismay.

"There," said the storekeeper, descending at last, after he and his companions had sent down some thirty or forty tons of rock—"I guess the skunks won't get out of that place in a hurry. We can go down, lads, now, all but say three, who can be relieved every four hours. They'll soon be for shouting for mercy."

In fact, the gang were so taken by surprise that they would have surrendered at once, since, though they had plenty of provisions, water was scarce; and Vasquez was summoned, to get there just as the last rays of daylight were being excluded by the little avalanches of stone that came clattering down.

"We're done for now, captain," said Coyote Tobe.

"Bah!" ejaculated Vasquez, with a contemptuous expression. "Are you afraid of being in the dark?"

"No," said Tobe; "but this is being buried alive."

"Pish!" ejaculated Vasquez. "A coyote ought to love a dark hole in the mountain. The idiots! They will go now, and think we are beaten—that they have done for us."

"And so they have," groaned half a dozen.

"Bah!" cried Vasquez. "You are all children. Wait till two or three days are past. You can drink, rest, and play cards till then."

"But what then?" cried Tobe.

"What then, baby?" snarled Vasquez—"what then? A keg of powder, a fusee, a train, and get out of the way. Puff! The blocks of stone will be blown out into the valley, and our door will be open."

"He's a genius," cried Tobe, "that he is. Bravo, captain, you're in your right place."

"Thanks," said Vasquez, coldly. "And now, perhaps, in a short time I shall ask you to come and see our friend Si Slocum."

CHAPTER XLIV.—JACK'S JOURNEY.

ALL this time Jerry Blackburn had been prowling about in the mountains, with his gun and little Freddie, in the hope of finding out where his master was hidden, but all in vain; till one morning Jack, the dog, entered the storekeeper's hut, where the whole of our friends were assembled, and, by his actions and uneasiness, drew Jerry's attention to him.

Ruth Slocum was attending on Wallace, so that there was nothing to hinder the movement; and the consequence was that Jerry got up, took his long gun, and thrust another charge into it—there were already two.

"Mass' Freddie, boy, I guess Jack found somefin. You bring you rifle, an' come 'long."

Freddie seized his little piece, while Jerry slipped the strap of a wallet over his shoulder, into which receptacle he thrust a loaf of the storekeeper's bread and a lump of cooked bacon.

"Dah," he said—"dat in case we want um."

Half an hour after, they were in the rocky wood that ran down into a great gorge, north-west of the gulch proper, which, bare and sterile, joined the wooded gorge just north of the settlement, forming a great V, in which, piled up mass above mass, were the higher mountains.

Jack was close in front of them, steadily trotting on, only glancing back at times to see if he was followed in the winding way that he took to avoid huge trees and blocks of stone; while, so rich was the undergrowth in the moist cañon, that the travellers were walking in a kind of twilight.

Freddie followed the dog, and Jerry who, in addition to his long gun, had his belt decorated with revolvers, a bowie knife, and an old sword, came cautiously after—the muzzle of his long gun about three yards in front, more or less, and his finger on the trigger; so that had the black been alarmed—which was likely—and pressed the trigger, and had the gun gone off—which was not likely—it would have gone hard with little Freddie.

"Say, Freddie, my boy," said Jerry, thickly, "keep good look-out, little boss. I speck dat ole dog smell um way to Mass' Si Slocum. Golly, only tink if we do go, kill all de rowdy, and save de boss and Miss Kate Townsam!"

"Yes, he's going straight away somewhere, Jerry," cried the boy, in his shrill, childish treble. "Jack has been hunting about till he found father."

Jack looked round, wagged his tail, and then went steadily on.

Hour after hour did they plod on, till the boy grew so weary that he was obliged to rest; the way becoming intricate, and at times a sheer climb.

Jack sat patiently down beside them, waiting; and now Jerry's forethought in bringing provisions stood them in good stead—the meal they made and the rest refreshing the boy so that he leaped up, and as he did so Jack gave a loud bark and went steadily on.

As the afternoon drew on, the ground seemed to ascend, and became more toilsome; but still they climbed on, till about sundown, when they found themselves on a shelf of rock, gazing down at a sea of verdure, the tops of the forest trees being a couple of hundred feet below, and spreading out as far as eye could reach.

On their right, sheer from the shelf on which they stood—a little plateau of some few hundred feet across—the mountain went up almost perpendicularly, like a vast grey wall, dotted with little dark patches of sturdy bushes and trees, which clung in the fissures of the rock; and these patches were gilded by the setting sun, which bathed the sea of golden green leaves beneath them.

Jack was some twenty feet above them, standing in a faint track made by the moufflons, or mountain sheep, looking down at them, as if saying "Come on;" but Freddie sank down, whimpering, upon his knees, crying—

"Oh, Jack, I'm so tired, I can't come any farther."

"I 'spec' you got us in nice debble of mess, Mass' Jack," said Jerry, rubbing his woolly head. "How we get back Randan Gulch in de dark dis chile can't tell. 'Speck I have to carry de boy."

"Oh, Jerry, I'm so tired and so hungry!"

"No go no farder now, Jack," said Jerry, laying down his gun, just as the sun dipped and touched the pine sea. "'Top bit here—lubbly place."

He took half a dozen strides, to where Jack was already lapping the water in a natural rock basin, formed by the dripping of a tiny waterfall, which came from a little rift between two rocks; while just to the right was a clump of thick firs, whose needles lay deep beneath their spreading boughs.

"Come 'long here, Mass' Freddie, boy," cried Jerry, "and we hab big feast."

The boy went wearily to the indicated place, drinking with avidity of the pure, cool water; while Jerry carefully divided in two portions the supply of bread and bacon, putting half back in his wallet, which he hung upon the tree, and then cutting portions for the boy, who grew brighter as he satisfied his hunger, but ended by dropping off fast asleep, with his head in Jerry's lap, and a piece of bread and bacon unfinished in his hand.

"Hy-ah, Jack, you come an' eat that up," said Jerry, pointing to the pieces.

And the dog, who had been sitting on his haunches watching them, and blinking his eyes, came and took the slices of provision, and ate them in two or three mouthfuls.

"Now, I guess I berry hungry too," said Jerry, taking up what was on the ground; "but dere's de breakfass a morrow morning, an' dat boy be terrible hungry. I guess I eat big lot if I begin, so—"

Jerry hesitated, sighed, and finished by cutting off a small piece of bread and a large piece of the yellow outside of the bacon, putting the remainder in the wallet, with that which he had cut off before.

"Dah, Mass' Jack, sah, dat little bit bread for dis niggah, and big bit bacon for you. Come on."

He gave the dog the bacon in morsels, and ate his own piece of dry bread very slowly, apostrophising the animal as he went on.

"Ab, you nebber cum sniffun, Jack. You gobble all up once. I eat um slowly, an'make last long time. Ah, I berry glad I have good tuck out yes'day night. I tink I eat two pound bacon, an' nearly whole loaf, 'side de big brekfass I get dis mornin."

It was nearly dark; and settling himself in a comfortable place, after taking off his loose cotton jacket, Jerry laid all the arms together, and scraped the dry pine needles over the locks, to keep off the night dew. Then, lifting Freddie into his lap, he placed the boy comfortable, and lay down, curling himself round the little fellow, so as to keep him warm, while he carefully tucked the jacket round the boy's shoulders and chest.

"Now, you Jack, sah, you come close up dat side, and keep de chile warm; an' if you let any ob dem dam tickle flea come out you ugly hide, I gib you toco in de mornin'."

The dog crept up to the group, and laid himself down, nestling up to Freddie's side, so that the little fellow, surrounded as he was, could not help being warm.

"Now, you Jack," continued Jerry, raising himself a little, "you see Massa Freddie fass sleep, and I so tired I fas' asleep 'reckly; so you got keep de watch wid one eye open. You bark if anybody comes."

"Ah," continued Jerry, looking down in the dim twilight at the handsome little face pillow'd on his arm, as the boy slept peacefully and well, "him juss like um fader, where him aint like him moder. He lubbly boy, dat he am. Dis chile wonder, if he get marry to lubbly niggah lady he know—"

Jerry laid down his woolly head in the pine needles, with his chin upon the boy's fair, glossy curls.

"If he get marry, an' hab little boys, wedder dey come juss like this hy-ah boy?"

This took some time to think out, and the result came at last in company with a gape.

"Ah—yah—ah!" yawned Jerry, showing a tremendous spread of white teeth, "I'speck dey would be juss de same, only not quite so white."

A minute later, and Jerry and the dog were, like the boy, fast asleep.

The Big Fusshe.

AS an instance of the absorbing interest which salmon fishing may excite in the breast of an enthusiastic fisherman, we cannot refrain from quoting this amusing anecdote which Mr. Francis gives:

"There is a story told of a pawkey old Scot, whose wife was very ill, but who, tempted by the fine fly in which the river was, had just slipped away and stepped down to 'tak a cast o' her.' He had just risen and hooked a splendid fish, which was showing him magnificent sport, when one came running to him, wringing his hands and crying—

"Laird, laird, the mistress is deein—deelin—deelin!"

"A mon! ye dinna say sae! Rin awa' bock, thin, Donald, and tell her joost to hing on till a've killt the fusshe."

"The words were hardly out of his mouth when, as if to punish him for his inhumanity, the salmon gave a great spring and broke away.

"Was ever the likes o' that?—it's joost a judgment!" was the exclamation, as, handing the rod to his retainer, he hurried off to his wife's bedside, and duly received her last breath, and cheered her last moments.

"Great and sincere was his grief, and he mourned her deeply. Old friends and neighbours came to console him. His old crony, Rab McAllister, mingled his sympathy with praises of the virtues of the departed.

"She was aye a gude wife, laird."

"The laird assented, with a sad shake of the head.

"But we're a' dust, laird."

"We're that—oh, we're that; dinna doot it," was the melancholy response.

"And ye've tint her, laird."

"At this the laird brightened up.

"It's verra true, Rabb; but did ye hear of the big fusshe the news o't tint me i' the morn? Hey, mon, that was a fusshe!"

The Egotist's Note-book.

WARNING! Don't carry a gun through the streets without a licence. If you do, you will be liable to be fined, even as a man was fined at Wandsworth the other day, the magistrate saying that, even if the gun were separated, and one man carried the stock and another the barrel, it still came within the Act of Parliament. What, then, about the volunteers?

A young gentleman, aged twelve, who has been amusing himself by stealing greengrocers' ponies and carts, and regaling himself on the proceeds of the sale, has been sent to hard labour for six weeks, and for five years to a reformatory—a capital check to such playful tricks.

The *Daily News* correspondent at the seat of war says that he arrived the other day at a place, faint and hungry, but there was not a scrap of food. "Fortunately, a cake of *riz-au-gras* of the Société Générale

des Potages Economiques furnished me with an excellent meal, and helped to restore fresh life into a broken-down brother correspondent, whom I passed in distress on the road, and who did not reach the village until long past midnight, quite worn-out with fatigue and exhaustion." It is a good plan to carry your dinner with you. In this case it is contained in a neat tin bonbon box, like so much pearl sago.

Few of the persons who handle Bank of England notes ever think of the amount of labour and ingenuity that is expended on their production. The notes are made from pure white linen cuttings only, never from rags that have been worn. They have been manufactured for nearly 200 years at the same spot—Laverton, in Hampshire, and by the same family—the Portals, who are descended from some French Protestant refugees. So carefully is the paper prepared, that even the number of dips into the pulp made by each workman is registered on a dial by machinery, and the sheets are carefully counted and booked to each person through whose hands they pass. The printing is done by a most curious process in Mr. Coe's department within the Bank building. There is an elaborate arrangement for securing that no note shall be exactly like any other in existence. Consequently there never was a duplicate of a Bank of England note, except by forgery.

A young fellow, who was a bit of a Bohemian, fell in love with his laundress, a charming young creature; and in order that he might see her frequently, he contrived to make her call every day to take something to the wash.

As chance would have it, they were separated from each other for a time, but by and by they met again.

"Have you been true to me all this time?" inquired the comely damsel.

"See," said he, "I have worn nothing but paper collars since we parted."

A pianiste, of considerable reputation, recently took fresh apartments.

Her new landlord asked her the nature of her profession, and on being informed, he exclaimed—

"How splendid! I'm learning to play the flute, and we can have some pleasant musical evenings together."

He was not a little astonished a few minutes later on receiving from his new tenant a note intimating her intention to give up her apartments at the end of the week.

At an evening party, a gentleman met a rising young author, whom he wished to compliment.

"Unfortunately," he remarked, "I have read but one of your books."

"Which was that?" eagerly demanded the author.

"The one which I believe passes for your masterpiece."

"Was it so-and-so?" asked the author, mentioning the title of one of his works.

"No."

"Was it so-and-so?" giving the title of another book.

"No."

The same answer was repeated several times, when the puzzled author exclaimed—

"Are you sure it was none of these?"

"Sure of it."

"Then that's all I've ever written."

There was a pause.

A youngster, who had been entrusted with half-a-crown to make some small purchases, instead of going about his business, stayed to indulge in a little dice-play with himself, using the half-crown as stakes.

After playing a little while, he suddenly jumped up, exclaiming—

"There, I've lost. How shall I ever be able to pay back that half-a-crown?"

Apropos of the tight-fitting dress mania. At some of the leading Paris houses they dress up young girls in the newest mode, so that their customers may see the effect of the style and material.

A lady, looking at one of these girls dressed in a robe that fitted exceedingly close, asked her whether she could walk about in it.

"Certainly, madame," was the reply. "It's easy enough to promenade in it, but I can't go up or down stairs."

A rough-looking fellow was beating a dog most unmercifully with a stick, and a passer-by ventured to remonstrate with him for his brutality.

"That's quite right," said he; "but this dog is such a brute that he hasn't even got sense enough to bite me in self-defence."

"And supposing he did bite you?"

"Bite me! By Jove, sir, I should kill him."

The drama of to-day:

"Do you think your new piece will be successful?"

"Well, I can't guess. You are sure of nothing on the stage. But it has one of the elements of success: there isn't a single new idea in it."

"Mamma, do take me to the theatre with you?"

"But, my dear, you always have the headache and are poorly when I take you."

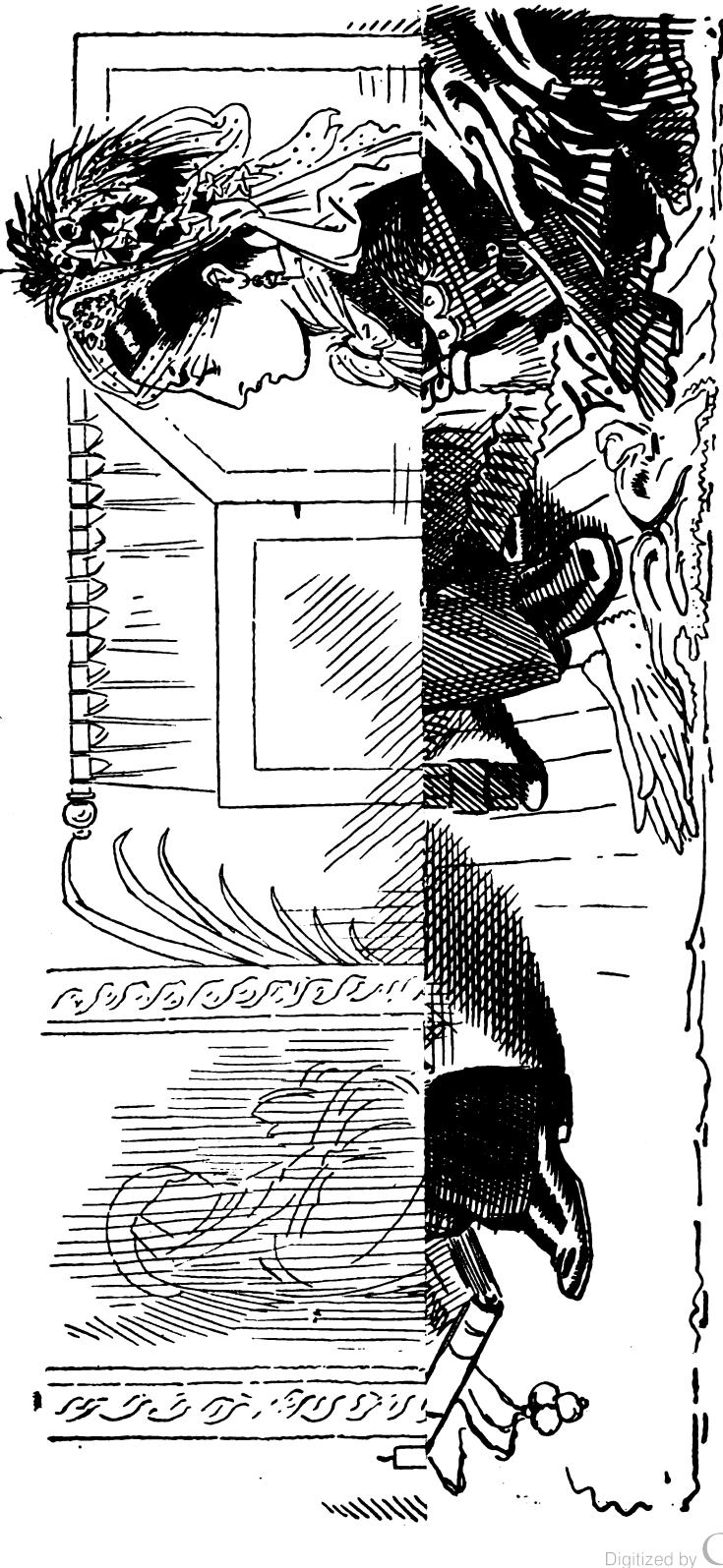
"Yes, ma, but do take me! I'll promise to have the headache beforehand, and then I shall be all right."

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

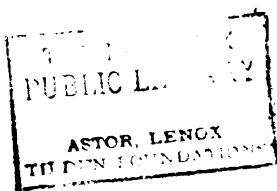
Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zylo-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

THE PRIESTS IN ABSOLUTION.



AFTER A BOX ON THE EARS.

BRITISH HIGH-CHURCH LADY: "How dare you ask me such a question!"



Under the Snow.

N passing from Chile to the Argentine Republic, the lofty Andes present an almost insurmountable barrier. There are but two points throughout the whole extent of that country where travel can be undertaken with any certainty of a successful termination. One of these is situated in the valley of Aconcagua, and is by far the more popular route. The other, near Tome, though shorter, is much more precipitous and difficult of passage.

For six months of the year both these passes are closed by the almost perpetual snow-storms which prevail, and it often happens that, during the summer months, when least expected, the traveller finds himself weather-bound by a premature fall of snow. At these times, however, it quickly evaporates under the influence of the sun's rays, and the imprisoned ones go on their way rejoicing; but it is at the commencement of the so-called rainy season that real dangers are encountered. All intercourse between the two countries must now be suspended. Friends who have tarried too long on their visits to friends are now anxious to return. Cattle drovers are desirous of making one more trip. Merchants count up their imaginary gains, which one more mule-train of goods, safely transported across the country, would yield. The snow-line, always visible the entire year, still maintains its position near the peaks of the mountains. The old weather prophets prognosticate fair weather for a week or two yet, and so the adventurous ones start out, trusting to luck for a safe passage.

In 1869, I had occasion to undertake this journey, and I consider it as a miraculous dispensation of Providence that I was spared to tell the tale.

My business was urgent—a case of life or death. The travel was nearly suspended for the season, but a foolhardy drover was found who had determined upon one more trip, and I gladly seized the opportunity of accompanying him.

Our route for the first two or three days was pleasant and agreeable; the weather, all that could be desired. We were nearing the summit; one day more would bring us past the worst part of the road.

At this juncture, we came to the celebrated "Cueva del Viajeros," which affords the best of protection to the benighted traveller. Completely shut in on all sides, it extends back some two hundred feet, and is perhaps half as wide, with only one entrance, and that half hidden by a thick undergrowth of espinos and cactus.

Although we could have travelled some little distance yet before nightfall, Cifuentes—the drover—concluded it would be best to spend the night here, and make up for lost time by an early start on the morrow.

Our retreat, though rough and rugged, afforded ample room for the cattle, which were reluctantly driven into the almost impenetrable darkness, and were left to accommodate themselves as best they might, while we turned our attention to satisfying the wants of the inner man.

With our party was an old *montenero* (mountaineer), who had spent his seventy years among

these wilds, and to whom every cloud, every gust of wind, or flight of birds was a sure indicator of coming events, and as readily defined as his constant observation could possibly make them. He had been sent out to gather fuel, and now returned with a doleful tale about a flock of wild geese flying southward, and snow-banks piled up in the northern skies.

Cifuentes was not disconcerted by the intelligence; he thought there might be a slight fall; but to be prepared for any emergency, we all set about gathering the scant supply of fuel, and storing it away inside the cave.

To me a snow-storm was but a trifling affair. I had often heard travellers tell their almost incredible stories of the immense drifts which they had encountered, but I was quite unprepared for the spectacle which I beheld the next morning—the mouth of our cavern was completely blocked up. With shovels we worked our way through, to obtain a glimpse of what was transpiring around us.

The air was thick with the fast-falling snow, and made still more dense by the fierce winds bringing it in huge showers from the tops of the ledges, down through the ravine, where it settled, layer upon layer, threatening to fill it up even with the tops of the mountains.

But we were as yet undismayed. We had good shelter and plenty of provisions, and if they should fail, there were the cattle, which would afford us sustenance for an indefinite length of time; but old José was an exception to our otherwise cheerful party.

"A seven days' storm, señores," says he, "and probably this place will hold all that is left of us; for, you see, we can't get on, even if it should hold up now. God help us, and be merciful to my little ones!"

There were eight of us, all told, and we took our turns in endeavouring to keep the mouth of the cavern clear—a difficult and tedious operation; for no sooner was a hole cut through into daylight, than the drifting banks would close it up again; but by dint of steady perseverance, we managed to maintain a free ventilation.

Five days ran their slow course, and yet the storm howled with unabated fury. Thus far we had suffered for nothing; but now our supply of fuel was gone, and our scant stock of grain for the cattle, which we had doled out by the handful, was also fast disappearing.

Cifuentes saw that his herd, or at least a part of them, must be sacrificed. His men were called up, and fully one-half of the animals were slain. Their carcasses furnished us with both meat and heat; and although the improvised fuel was anything but odorous, the heat was agreeable to our half-stiffened bodies.

"There are two hundred of them left yet," says Cifuentes, as he threw on a fresh quarter of beef to replenish the fire; "and when they are gone, there's the sixty mules to help us out. We are good for the whole winter's siege. What do you say, José?—how long will this thing last?"

"Remember, señor, that I told you it was a seven days' storm; and that, just at the beginning of the

season, means imprisonment here for at least a month, and perhaps six."

The storm finally abated, and we ventured out to see what was the prospect for an early start.

Even the faintest trace of our path was entirely obliterated. The ravine, hundreds of feet in depth, was filled nearly to a level with our retreat. It was a dreary outlook. Our only chance for a renewal of our journey lay in the hopes that it might rain, and a subsequent frost form a crust on the surface sufficiently strong to hold us. For this event to happen, we waited and watched forty-eight long, dreary days, passing the interval in endeavouring to keep warm over the sickening, smouldering fire of bones and flesh; but, finally, the much-desired rain-storm set in, and we made all preparations for a departure.

Our remaining stock of cattle and mules had been killed long since; and we were compelled to leave behind us everything except what was actually necessary for our subsistence on the road.

At the break of day we started on our tramp. The snow-crust was hardly strong enough to bear us. At nearly every step some one of the party would sink in, which caused a delay until he was extricated.

The first day's travel only gave us ten miles as accomplished; but José bade us be of good cheer, as probably the next twenty-four hours would bring us to the hut of the Puño bridge-keeper where we could rest and recruit.

A place was selected in which to pass the night. The snow was to be excavated sufficiently deep and wide to afford shelter for us all. They applied themselves to the task, while I engaged in rounding-off the top of our "dug-out." They had nearly gained the desired depth, when, suddenly, Cifuentes sank from view; and then, the others grasping at the yielding mass, which was now sliding in on all sides, followed, shouting for me to help them—to throw a rope; but they were out of sight in an instant of time, and I was forced back from the edge to avoid sharing the same fate. The small, funnel-shaped hole through which they had disappeared was fast assuming gigantic proportions. I turned and ran, fearing at every step to be engulfed; but, finally, I ventured back, and listened for some signs of life. Not a sound could I hear. As I could do nothing by myself, I bethought me of the bridge-keeper's hut, and, though worn out with my day's tramp, determined to try and reach it, still hoping against hope to rescue my companions.

How I reached there, or whether I gave a correct account of what had happened, I knew not then. For six weeks was I confined to my bed, delirious, and with a raging fever; but, as I slowly recovered, my hospitable host recounted how I had arrived there, exhausted; but by signs had given him to understand what had occurred. He, with his three sons, went to the place, and succeeded in getting at the dead bodies. He said we had chosen for our encampment a spot directly over a narrow chasm, and as the snow was removed little by little, it finally gave way, precipitating the party down to the very bottom, and dashing them against the craggy sides.

The Domestic Confessions of Mrs. Chignal.

THE FIFTH.—RACHEL'S VISITOR.

I T would not have required a feather to knock me down—a breath would have done it—as a rush of recollections came careering through my brain. I saw it all now, and my surmises had been right. Oh, Alfred, Alfred, my cup of bitterness was full indeed!

"Take her off, policeman, this instant," said Alfred, furiously.

What, let her go, and deprive me of the promised information?—no, never.

I regained my strength in an instant; for there is no stimulus on earth like jealousy to go coursing through the veins.

I started up, and placed myself between the policeman and the girl, pointing as I did so to the door.

"Go away," I said; "she shall not be taken to prison, and I shall not appear against her."

"Stuff and nonsense!" said Alfred, angrily. "I say she shall go."

"And I say she shall not," I exclaimed, facing him, and speaking now in a low, hot whisper, the words seeming to burn my lips as they came hissing forth. "Wretch, destroyer of my peace!" I said, "do you wish your ill-doings to appear in the columns of the ribald press?"

He turned pale, and faced round to the policeman; for he shrank from my searching eye—cowarded down before me; and I knew—oh, I knew it was true!

"Well, policeman," said Alfred, behaving with all the cowardice of a guilty man, "perhaps we may let her off this time."

Of course the constable had not heard a word that Jane said to me, and he looked a little puzzled, as he said—

"Well, sir, that's as you think, sir; but in such a case as this—"

"Yes, exactly," said Alfred, hurriedly; "but come into my study, and I'll speak to you about it. You see, Jane here is a favourite servant of my wife."

The policeman grinned, and he looked in a curious way at Jane—just for all the world as if he were a bull-dog, and she were a bone being taken out of his mouth; but he followed Alfred into his study, and I believe the coward gave him five shillings. At all events, the door banged to a few minutes after, and then Alfred came to the dining-room. But no, there was no entrance for him to my presence; for I had turned the key, and I was alone with Jane.

He knocked, after trying the door twice, but there was no reply given to his appeal; so he walked slowly away, muttering, and a few moments after the pungent fumes of nasty tobacco began to steal into the room, where Jane sat, giving a sob or two at intervals, and I stood watching her.

"Now, Jane," I said, at last, "you are about to plunge a sharp thorn in my aching heart, but I will listen. Now, tell me about—about—no, I cannot mention the name."

"But is the pleeceman gone, ma'am, and won't he come back?" said Jane.

"Certainly not—he will not return," I said, with a hysterical catch in my breath.

"And you won't send me to prison, for—for—for letting those things get into my box?"

"No, Jane," I said, severely; "I will not punish you for stealing those things."

Jane gave a gulp, and was silent.

"I am listening, Jane," I said. "Tell me about that creature."

"Well, mum," said Jane, very eagerly, "it was while you was upstairs, mum, and Miss Wilkins was keeping house for you."

"Yes, Jane," I said, eagerly; for I was wondering that I had never seen before that my cousin, Arabella Wilkins, was a serpent.

"Well, mum, it was after dinner one night, mum, that I went down into the kitchen, mum, and Sarah was a washing-up, mum; and she says to me, she says, 'Jane,' she says, 'there's a letter just come for master,' she says, 'take it up for me, there's a good girl!'"

"Go on, Jane," I said, "I am listening."

"Well, mum, I took the letter, for Sarah was all in a muddle, and I went up to the dining-room door and knocked."

"Yes, Jane," I said, excitedly, for my heart was beating furiously.

"Well, mum, nobody answered, and I knocked again."

"Pray, pray go on, Jane," I cried. "Don't you see how you are torturing me?"

"Well, mum, nobody answered then; so I opened the door gently, meaning to lay the letter on the table and come away, when—lor, mum, don't look so pale as that! Are you going to faint?"

"Go on, woman—go on!" I cried.

"Well, mum, as I was a saying, I opened the door and went in, and there was master—"

"Yes, Jane," I said, in a whisper.

"With his arm round—"

"Oh, Jane!"

"Miss Wilkins's waist, mum."

"Impossible! Jane," I sobbed—"not round her waist—not quite round?"

"Well, mum, it was a long ways round, anyhow."

"Are you sure, Jane?" I said.

"Oh, yes, mum, because she'd got on a white dress, and his coat was black."

"But it might have been her black waistband."

"Yes, mum, it might have been, though it was a very thick one; but black waistbands wouldn't try to kiss her."

"And did—"

"Yes, mum, I see him; and just as he was a going to, he caught sight of me in the glass, and turned round and called me a fool, and Miss Wilkins went and looked out of the window."

"That will do, Jane," I said, in a hoarse voice; for my heart was sore, and I suppose it affected my throat. "Now go, and never, never let me set eyes upon you again."

"And you won't send the policeman after me, ma'am, and have me took up?"

"No, woman," I said, getting horribly exasperated.

"Now go, and relieve me of your presence."

I hurried her away, and was going back into the dining-room, when I found that man had come in there in my absence; and need I say how he begged and implored to be forgiven, and how weak I was? For, after all, I could not help feeling that there was truth in what he said, "that the cheap eighteenpenny sherry we had then in the house had acted like poison upon his moral system, or he would never have behaved as he did."

"Then you did kiss her?" I said, bitterly; and he writhed beneath my glance.

"My own," he said, imploringly, "I could not tell you, if I were on the rack, whether it was I who tried to kiss Arabella Wilkins, or whether Arabella tried to kiss me—I think it was she."

"Oh, Alfred, Alfred!" I groaned.

"Never let the hateful woman darken our doors again," he said.

And I promised him I never would, and I forgave him.

I was not long in getting a new nursemaid in the place of Jane; but it is of Rachel that I must speak next.

Poor Rachel! There were salient points in her character that I liked, and during the first month I did everything I could for her. I used to praise her to darling Woppie, and give her presents; and I was just going to write to dear old Aunt Tatlock to come when I began to notice a change. As for Alfred, he had been finding out things in her to pick to pieces for a long time; but, with all her failings, I will say this for Rachel—she did always cook the potatoes well, and even if the kitchen was left dirty, she herself always looked smart.

Heigho! I suppose that hankering after the male human being comes natural to our sex. I fear that I felt it very strongly before Woppie came and placed that golden fetter round my finger, and made me his.

The first thing that I had any words with Rachel about was the cold meat. It was in this way.

I went down in the kitchen in the morning, and I said—

"About dinner to-day, Rachel?"

"Yes, mum," she said, "what shall I order?"

"Really, I think," I said, "the cold lamb, with a bit of fish and a salad, will do very nicely for to-day."

"The cold what, ma'am?" said Rachel, with a strange little cough.

"The cold lamb, Rachel," I repeated. "We hardly touched it last night."

"No, mum," says Rachel; "but somebody else did. There's hardly a bit left."

"Good heavens, Rachel!" I said. "Why, what's become of it?"

"Well, the fack is, mum," she said, in a confidential way, "it's Keziah. She's young, mum, and growing, and the way that gal do eat's alarming."

"Impossible, Rachel," I exclaimed. "Do you mean to tell me that Keziah has eaten a whole shoulder of lamb for her supper, when she ought only to have had bread and cheese?"

"Lor' bless you, mum, she won't touch the Dutch cheese; and she's always that hungry that I'm obliged to give her meat. She says it's seeing the

baby always eating makes her turn ravenous-like; and she do go it awful."

I had my doubts, and determined to watch Miss Keziah; but I said nothing—only took my opportunities of seeing how matters went. And if I didn't stand at the nursery door, with my flesh seeming to creep on my very bones; for there was my lady, with a beautiful basinsful of my corn-flour and milk, feeding the baby; and for every spoonful she gave my precious darling, if she didn't stick three in her own horrible cavern of a mouth.

That was what dear Alfred would have called corroborative evidence. But still I could not believe it possible that Keziah could possibly consume the vast amount of nutriment attributed to her. She might be growing, but under the influence of the food she was said to consume she would really have grown into a giantess, or a fat woman, and she did not alter a bit; for Woppy and I watched her when she was carrying baby up and down the room, and never once did hook, eye, or button fly off, neither was there the sound of a ruptured lace.

"It's all gammon," Alfred said.

Now, I know this is coarse; but he will say these rude things, and if I translate them, and say nonsense, or untrue, or deceit, instead of gammon, I shall not convey to you the forcible nature of Alfred's expressions.

"I tell you what it is," he said—"there's some little game going on. It's soldiers."

"Soldiers?" I said, not knowing what he meant.

"Yes, goosey," he exclaimed—by the way, goosey is one of his old terms of endearment. "Yes," he went on, "soldiers, cousins, cupboard lovers, or perhaps it may be the policeman."

"Nonsense, dear," I said; "those are such old, stale jokes against servant girls, and I don't believe they are any of them true."

"Well," he said, "we'll see."

So that night if we didn't watch her, after Keziah had gone up in the nursery, and was watching by baby's side, which the dreadful girl always did with her eyes shut, her mouth wide open, and her head thrown back over the chair, saying—

"Gug—gug—guggle—uggle; gug—gug—guggle—uggle," in the most horrible way; just as if the invisible fairies were trying to poke corks down her throat, and strangling her.

Oh, how I did fly at her, the first time I found her out!

"You wicked, naughty, idle girl!" I said, "to pretend to watch baby like that, and go to sleep, and risk setting fire to the house. Where do you expect to go to when you die?"

I shook her tremendously as I said this, and her stupid, sleepy head wobbled backwards and forwards as she stared at me, and listened to what I said; and, really and honestly, no sooner had I got outside the room than she was off again.

I went back and shook her, and stopped her horrible guggle-uggle, sitting down and watching her, so as to keep her awake; when if baby didn't wake up too, and cry so that nothing would pacify the darling. I walked him up and down, so did Keziah; but it was all of no use, and I grew nearly distracted; for I could hear darling Woppy shouting down-

stairs, and the sound came up—buzz, buzz, buzz—through the floor; and he always will say frightful things when baby cries, and declare we have stuck pins in it, or scalded its throat, or are pinching it. The fact is, you see—I suppose it's owing to his being such a healthy child—baby cries very loudly indeed; and, as I said, I was growing quite distractred.

He knocked the coral and bell out of Keziah's hand in his frantic struggles; and when I jingled my keys, he hit them with his little fist, and away they went into the washhand jug, where I wetted my lace sleeves in plunging my hand in to get them out.

"Oh, dear me, how darling Woppy is swearing!" I said to myself; and then aloud, "Oh, baby! baby! what am I to do with you?"

"Leave him along o' me, mum," said Keziah, in an injured tone; "it's you being here as keeps him awake."

I thought there might be some truth in it, so I determined to go—partly influenced, I must own, by hearing dear Alfred swearing so downstairs.

So I went, leaving my darling shrieking with all its might, and turning quite black in the face.

"Have you been sitting on that child?" asked Alfred, crossly, as soon as I got down to him.

"How can you say such things, dear?" I exclaimed. "Now, do be patient; the little sweet will be quiet directly."

That was a random shot, for I never expected he would be quiet for hours after, being woke up as he was; but, to my astonishment and delight, if he did not cease crying as if by magic; and then as soon as I had pacified my baby—I mean, of course, darling Woppy—I went upstairs softly on tiptoe.

"I say you!" Alfred shouted after me, "don't you wake that kid again."

Kid, you know—so horribly coarse, just as if I were a nannygoat. I do wish people would give up slang. The idea of calling my darling lamb a kid!

I stole upstairs again, to tell Keziah to be very careful not to awaken the pet, when I felt completely taken aback as I opened the nursery door; for if the horrible, stupid girl had not gone off fast asleep again; and there she was, with her mouth wide open, directed straight at the ceiling, and saying "Gug—gug—guttle—uggle," at regular intervals.

I never felt temptation so strongly before as I did then; for there it lay on the washstand, wet, and exactly the right size for slipping in; and serve her right, too, if I had done it—going to sleep like that!

I mean there, ready to hand, lay a big piece of soap; and, oh, how I did want to pop it into her open mouth!

I resisted the temptation, though, and took hold of her by the shoulders instead, giving her such a shake; and well she deserved it.

That, of course, stopped her stertorous snoring; and she started up, with her eyes like two saucers.

"You wicked—"

I did not get any further; for baby shrieked out once more, furiously, and Alfred leaped in his chair with rage.

"You've been and done it again, mum," said the dreadful girl.

And I ran out of the room; for the child's shrieks were maddening, and Alfred was needing my checking hand.

It did not occur to me then, but I found it out afterwards by sad experience, it was the cessation of Keziah's horrible snores that woke up poor darling baby. He had grown so accustomed to hear her *gurgling* by his bedside that he would not sleep without—no, not if we tried him in a score of ways; so that, really, I had at last to give way, and, as dear Woppy put it, let her gurgle him off to sleep every night, even though we could hear it in our room after we had gone to bed.

Well, there now, all that about darling baby and Keziah, when I wanted to go on about watching Rachel. But there, it is so; babies always must be given way to, and there is no help for it.

Alfred and I, then, went to the front door, and placed it ajar one night, to see if any one came to see Rachel.

"Soldier, for a bob!" said Woppy, in his slangy way.

"If you must bet, sir," I said, "I will lay a wager for a pair of new gloves that it will be the policeman; but I warn you that if I lose I shall never pay, while, if I win, you must."

"Agreed," he said, for he was in a very merry humour.

And, then, if he did not put his arm round my waist and kiss me, just as he used before we were married.

"For shame, dear," I said.

But I liked it all the same; and it would have made me very happy if it had not brought up thoughts of a white dress and a black arm round the waist, and a door opening and shutting, and a staring servant girl standing there with a letter; and I sighed, for it almost seemed at that moment as if an evil spirit, or a zephyr, or the still small voice of conscience, or one of those things that do whisper to you, said in my ear, very distinctly—

"Miss Wilkins."

There was a dead silence; the gas lamps flickered, and we could see the lights in the houses across the street; when, to my astonishment and disappointment, Woppy gave a low chuckle.

"Soldier," he said.

He was right; for a great, tall Grenadier came along the road, and we drew back.

"There!" I said, triumphantly.

For the military person walked straight by, evidently bound for some other place.

Woppy whistled softly, and waited quite half an hour without adventure, when it was my turn, and I said, softly—

"There, then—six and a quarter, Woppy."

For tramp, tramp, in regular beat, came the policeman; and darling Alfred seemed so huffy and disappointed as we saw the helmeted man come along very slowly, staring hard at all the kitchen windows he passed, and really seeming to pause at ours, and—

Then he went on.

"Blow your six and a quarter, Goosey," said Alfred—slangy again, "you're wrong."

"I don't care, dear," I said. "I'm sure I was right, and he must have seen us."

"Couldn't have seen us," he said, spitefully. "Policemen, as a rule, can't see a yard before their noses; and I'm sure they couldn't see through a street door."

"I don't care, Alfred," I said, firmly; "nothing shall convince me that we were not seen by that man. He must have seen us."

"No, he mustn't," he said, aggravatingly.

"Yes, he must," I said; "he couldn't help it."

"Didn't see us."

"He did, Alfred," I exclaimed. "Don't contradict when you know very well you are wrong."

"I tell you, once for all," he said, "that—sh!"

I said "Sh," too. For just then there came a shuffling, shambling step along the pavement, and a shabby-looking, tall, thin man stopped opposite our house, and went—

"Phew-wy—phew-wy, phew-wy!"

I can't spell it any nearer, but it was a loud, peculiar whistle; and directly after, from our kitchen, came a sound that I had often heard before, but never heeded, just as if some one had drawn the poker rapidly across the kitchen fireplace bars.

"Now how about your six and a quarter?" said Alfred.

For the fellow softly went down to our kitchen door, which opened, and he went in.

The Compact.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I. (*continued.*)

THE next day Riquetta went to school in the schoolhouse at the foot of the mountains, where Martin Huss was teacher. From the first, master and pupil got on capitally together. Huss had taken up his winter quarters at the old inn, and there, as at school, the little mountain-girl was constantly before him, with her graceful, taking ways. At the very beginning, he was conscious of the danger that beset him; but he courted rather than shunned it.

During the first weeks of his stay at the inn, the young schoolmaster often encountered Cathcart. A black scowl and a look of cool indifference were the only signs of recognition that ever passed between the two. In his heart, Huss knew the rude, ill-natured boor was his sworn foe; but he never gave the fact a moment's thought.

One night, Riquetta was sitting alone in the chimney-corner, conning a lesson by the light of the fire, when the stage from Black Mountain rumbled up, and Cathcart entered suddenly, and walked up to the hearth. The girl shuddered, as she always did when he drew near, and made a movement to rise, but he put himself before her.

"Here's a little gift for you," said he.

He bent and flung around her neck a long bright chain of fine linked gold, with a cluster of coral charms attached—a chain that, ten years before, he had torn from the pack of Lanard.

"Well," he went on, staring at her with baleful eyes, "I've given you time to think about me, Ri-

quette, and I've watched the schoolmaster, and I'm pretty well up to what he means. What's the matter with me, that you can't take me for a husband? I can give you plenty of presents like this—I've got a store of 'em laid by for you, and a house up north, as I said once before. There's many a girl might go farther and fare worse. Come, now, isn't it so?"

Up rose Riquetta, with her big eyes flashing. She tore the chain from her neck, and flung it back at him.

"I'll not take such a gift!" she cried; "nor any gift from you. Never, never speak to me again."

His stolid face did not change much. The eyes under the beetle-brows seemed to narrow somewhat—that was all.

"That means, you won't have me, eh?"

"It means that," she answered.

"I'll warrant, when that schoolmaster asks the same question, you'll give him a different answer."

She crimsoned to her temples, and began slowly to retreat toward the door.

"I hate you for your insolence!" she cried, stamping passionately. "I hate you, because in my heart I have always felt you to be bad and wicked! I wish you had never come here. I wish I may never see your face again."

For answer, he strode up to her, caught her in his arms, and kissed her. Riquetta shrieked. At the sound the innkeeper himself came shuffling across the passage, and opened the door. Riquetta rushed to him, and threw her arms about his neck.

"How now!" said Hawk, looking from the beautiful, angry face of the girl to the sullen, defiant one of the man. "What's all this about?"

"I've asked her to marry me," answered Cathcart, "and she won't."

The innkeeper's face put on an odd, disconcerted look.

"You've asked her to marry you? Well, well. She's only a child yet; don't you be taking offence at that. Come out into the bar-room, and sit a spell with me. These girls—well, they be queer cattle, you know."

"I detest him!" cried Riquetta, all in a blaze; and ran away, and was seen no more that night.

Cathcart followed the innkeeper. The bar was quite deserted, for the last stage had come in, and the last loafer gone home. Hawk set a jolly mug of cider down to warm on the hearth, and then looked across at the stage-driver.

"So," he said, musingly, "you want Riquetta?"

"You've said it," answered Cathcart. "I do want her."

"Well," replied Hawk, not unkindly, "I've nothing agin you—you seem to me a likely young fellow enough; but girls are full of notions. She says she hates ye—well, p'raps she does, and p'raps she don't; they don't allus say what they mean. But, first of all, I'm going to tell ye about Riquetta."

At this moment the bar-room door opened, and Martin Huss entered. The innkeeper was not without eyes. He thought it quite as easy to address two lovers as one. As for Huss, he stood tall and contemptuous, and neither by word nor sign acknowledged the stage-driver's presence. With a black

face, Cathcart scowled on him from the end of the fireplace.

"I was talking of Riquetta," explained Hawk; and he looked at the schoolmaster, and poked the fire. "That's an odd name, aint it—Riquetta? You find her a smart girl, Mr. Huss?"

"By far the brightest pupil in the school," Huss answered, quietly.

"Folks call that her French aptness. Blood will tell, you know."

"French?" said Huss. "Is Miss Hawk French?"

"Well, yes. I don't know as either of you ever heard of it afore, but that little gal aint of my flesh and blood—aint nowise akin to me, in fact."

No, neither of them knew it. Cathcart stared.

Huss simply seemed waiting for further revelation.

"No," sighed old Hawk; "she's none of mine. I'll tell ye how it was, though it's a matter I don't like to speak about. We had jest buried a little gal—all we had, you know—when my old woman, who was a-visiting up north, near the Canada line, picked up this little chick, and brought her home here. The mother was dead, and the father—cur'us enough—couldn't be found high nor low; wasn't ever found, either—not so much as a footprint of him. Murdered he was, no doubt—a careless sort of fellow, apt to talk too much of his money. He was a French Canadian; his name was Lanard."

Dead silence. Cathcart, at the end of the mantel, with his face partly turned from the other two, did not move nor speak. Only his breathing sounded a little hurried and heavy.

"Well," went on Hawk, "my old woman adopted her, and we've brought her up as our own. She'll have all here when we're gone. I thought I'd like to have both o' you know the story. She knows it herself, you see. It was long afore she would stop taking on for her poor father—she was uncommon fond of him."

"Do you tell me he was murdered?" asked Huss, in an agitated voice.

"It's most likely, though nobody ever knowed for sartin, and never will know till the Judgment Day."

That beetle-browed man at the end of the mantel lifted his head at last.

"This girl," he stammered, thickly—"this Riquetta, the daughter o' that pedlar, Lanard!"

"Yes," answered Hawk. "Lord! what ails you, man? You've got a turn."

"I have," stuttered Cathcart. "I'll go and look at the beasts, and then git to bed."

He groped blindly toward the door, staggered, and fell headlong. The discovery he had made was too much, even for his callous brute nature.

Hawk ran to him, lifted him up, with the schoolmaster's help, and loosened his neckcloth. Both saw that his hands worked wildly, and his lips moved in incoherent mutterings.

"What's come over him?" cried Hawk, shaking him soundly. "Give him a h'ist into this chair, Mr. Huss, while I mix something hot. He aint a man generally given to vapours, I should say."

By the time the hot preparation appeared, Cathcart was so far recovered as to rise and gulp it down in one draught. Then, pushing both Huss

and the innkeeper aside, he strode out to the stables, flung himself down on the straw beside his horses, and all night long lay stretched out there, turning over his black thoughts in his black, harassed heart. Safe he was—safe he would be so long as that hole beneath the cellar stairs of the old shanty held its dead. It was not of danger that he thought, but simply and solely of Riquetta. Before the first streak of dawn crimsoned the mountain tops, the murderer of Lanard had settled with himself what course to pursue.

Martin Huss closed his school at an early hour on the following day, lingered at his old desk, writing copies for a while after the departure of the scholars, and then started for home. Half-way to the inn he left the beaten road, and turned aside for a solitary walk up the mountain.

It was a perfect winter day. There was no snow as yet, and the crisp air was full of sleepy sunshine. A murmurous wind sighed through the stripped boughs on the mountain side, and rustled the sere brown leaves heaped high in every hollow. Huss went on, scrambling up the rocks and spurs, till, pushing through a thicket of scrub-oaks, he stumbled on a figure sitting on a mossy buttress of rock, with her pretty brown hands clasped about her knees, looking down into the peaceful valley below—Riquetta.

Her long hair streamed down her shoulders in rich, sun-streaked masses. Her gay-coloured shawl was wrapped about her like a plaid. There was a pensive, brooding look in her great eyes, and the books she had brought from school lay secured by a leather strap on the moss beside her. With glowing eyes, Huss pushed back the leafless boughs.

"You have stolen a march on me," he said, smiling.

The colour darkened her cheek, as it always did at the sound of his voice.

"I am taking leave of the mountains for the winter," she answered. "There will soon be snow. It will be months, perhaps, before I can come here again."

He took a seat near her, with a consciousness in his manner that made her tremble. They were no longer master and pupil, but a young, fiery-hearted fellow, and a shy, coquettish girl. Huss drew out some specimens of quartz that he had picked up in his tramp, and discoursed of them in a learned way, while the sun began to set behind the mountains westward. The wind had died quite away; nevertheless, low down among the trees, near the two, they heard, first a sound like cautious footsteps, and afterwards, at intervals, something that seemed like laboured breathing.

"What is that?" said Riquetta, at last, turning her big, startled eyes on her companion, as they stood, still looking down into the valley, reluctant to go, reluctant to break the unspeakable charm of the moment.

"Some belated hare," he answered, deaf to all sounds, then, but the throbbing of his own heart.

"It is growing dark," murmured Riquetta. "Let us go home."

"Not yet," he pleaded; "one moment more." And now he held her fast, and now he bent and looked into her eyes; and now, conscious in every nerve of

what was coming, she began to palpitate and flush before him. "Riquetta!" His arm stole around her. "Love me! Oh, my darling! love me, as I love you, with heart, and soul, and strength!"

She yielded to that embracing arm, as a woman only yields to the man she loves. And still that sound of smothered breathing went on in the gathering night behind them.

"You do love me, then?" whispered Huss, rapturously.

Her head drooped against his shoulder.

"I am but a poor fellow, with my way to make yet," said Huss. "We may be poor at the start, darling, but, God willing, not always."

"I love you, Martin, that is enough;" she said, quietly. "Now, there are some things that I must tell you about myself."

"Darling, I have heard them already, from the innkeeper."

"About my poor, poor father, Martin?"

"Yes, Riquetta."

She clung to her lover's arm, and looked sadly off to the sunset, beyond the mountains.

"For years," she said, "I never fell asleep without dreaming, over and over again, one dream of him. He was always sitting in a low, black house, with two men. The place is very clear in my mind—a low, black house, in an open clearing. I can see it still. I believe he was killed there."

Her positive, solemn manner affected Huss oddly.

"My dear child!" he said, wrapping her shawl about her, "you must not brood any longer on that old sorrow. See, the sun has set, and it is growing dark and cold here; we must go."

He drew her into the embrace of his arm, and started to descend the mountain. He had not taken a dozen steps, however, when a loud report broke the stillness. A bullet came whistling through the dead branches, and, just grazing the cheek of Huss, buried itself in a pine-tree hard by.

"Oh, great Heaven!" cried Riquetta, and flung herself instinctively before her lover.

He thrust her quickly back, stood for a moment shielding her with his body, then turned and dashed into the thicket from whence the shot had come.

He tore about, beating up the thicket, peering into the gathering twilight, here, there, and everywhere—but in vain; no human thing met his sight. The mountain side was as still as the grave. The thickets were empty of every semblance of life. He searched till his patience was exhausted, then returned to Riquetta.

"Who could have done that?" she whispered, with pale lips.

"I have seen no one," he answered, evasively. "Let us say nothing of the matter."

They walked home to the inn. Hawk was apprised of the young couple's betrothal, but nothing was said about the stray shot upon the mountain.

When the stage came lumbering in that night, Cathcart stalked up to the bar and drank freely, but never lifted his eyes to look at Huss, who was sitting by the fire, talking with the innkeeper.

"Seems to me you're late to-night, driver," said Hawk.

Cathcart did not answer. He strode out quicker

than he had come in; but one of the passengers, who had entered also, was more communicative.

"We are late," he grumbled. "We had to change drivers on the route, for one thing. The reg'lar one was off somewhere this afternoon. He met us at Princetown, half drunk, I should say. I don't like the looks of that man."

He rose up shortly after, and went out, whistling softly to himself.

Succeeding this night came a few weeks of quiet. The betrothed lovers were absurdly happy, and the stage rumbled to and fro on its mountain route; and Cathcart came and went, with his evil eyes intent upon all that was passing at the inn, though he kept his evil lips as silent as the grave. One night, by some untoward chance, Riquetta encountered him in a lower passage of the house, a candle in her hand.

"So," he said, blocking the way with his burly figure, "you're going to marry the schoolmaster?"

"Yes," answered Riquetta.

"It's likely enough you might have given me a thought, if he hadn't come between us, with his good looks and his learning; eh?"

"It isn't at all likely that I ever should have thought of you in the least, under any circumstances."

"P'raps not. Anyway, he's not going to have you! • He'd like to marry Lanard's daughter, and then go hunting up Lanard himself; eh? We'll see."

With that, he turned about and stalked off down the passage.

A few days after this, a letter was brought to Martin Huss one morning, as he sat at breakfast in the pleasant old inn. He opened and read it, then started up with a cry.

"Riquetta!" he called, thinking only of her.

She ran to him, and was clasped to his heart in a transport of delight.

"My darling," he cried, breathlessly, "here are great good tidings truly! I am poor no longer—no longer! A relative of my mother has just died abroad, and I have fallen heir to ten thousand dollars."

"Oh, Martin! is it possible?"

"Yes, yes! I am summoned this very day to Princetown, to meet one of the legal executors there. See!"

He thrust the letter into her hand.

"I must start for Princetown at once," said Huss. "It is seven miles away. I will go by the next stage, and return to-night by the last one from Black Mountain."

He went to prepare for his brief journey. When he was ready, he opened the door and called out a gay good-bye to Riquetta, who was standing at the window, looking out into the inn-yard, very grave and pale. She held one hand thrust out of sight under her apron.

"Martin," she said, beckoning him to her side, "last night I dreamed again of my father, and that low, black house in the clearing, and the two men. And now I am going to tell you something odd. There seemed to be a bright light all about the three, and, for the first time, I saw their faces—all their faces, Martin—poor father's and those of the men who killed him. One was an old man, with a

grizzled head. The other—the other, Martin, was—that stage-driver out there—Cathcart!"

Huss took her in his arms. Her face was perfectly colourless.

"Riquetta! my dear child! Don't, darling! Cathcart! Think one moment. How very improbable! There is nothing in the world more absurd than dreams. You must not think of it now. Kiss me, love, and say good-bye."

"Good-bye," said Riquetta. Then she drew her hand from her apron, and he saw what it held—an old, silver-mounted pocket-pistol. "Take it, Martin," she said, breathlessly; "pray—pray take it! It was my own father's—the only thing in the world I have of his. It seems as if some harm was near you. Take it, Martin. You may need it before you return. Do, do take it!"

Huss laughed. Nevertheless, to pacify her, he took the old pistol, found it in good order—loaded, too, and ready for use. He dropped it into the pocket of his overcoat, and started for Princetown.

The War Correspondent.

BY THE WANDERING JEW.

THE COST OF A SNEEZE.

IF being out here is not enough to make a man long for the fleshpots of Egypt, I should like to know what is. As I don't suppose you can tell me, I may as well go on telling you.

Let me see. I was saying in my last that in avoiding Scylla I fell into— But of that anon.

As anon means now, here goes to relate our mishap.

You see, it was like this. Those who play at bowls must expect rubbers.

We had been playing at bowls, so, whether we expected one or not, we came in for a rubber.

India-rubber was nothing to it; and but for the elastic nature of yours truly, he would regularly have been rubbed out. As it was, he came out of the fire simply vulcanized.

I fancy I hear somebody exclaiming, "What a stretcher!" Let him exclaim. What I tell you is true, sir.

It was thusly. We had just escaped the Russian gunboat, then I became sensible of a sudden shock, a jar, a something else.

The something else was a catastrophe; and as I rose to the occasion quite fifty feet, I became aware that we in our turn had struck upon a torpedo laid by the Russians or by somebody else, and the launch had been skied, with all that were in it.

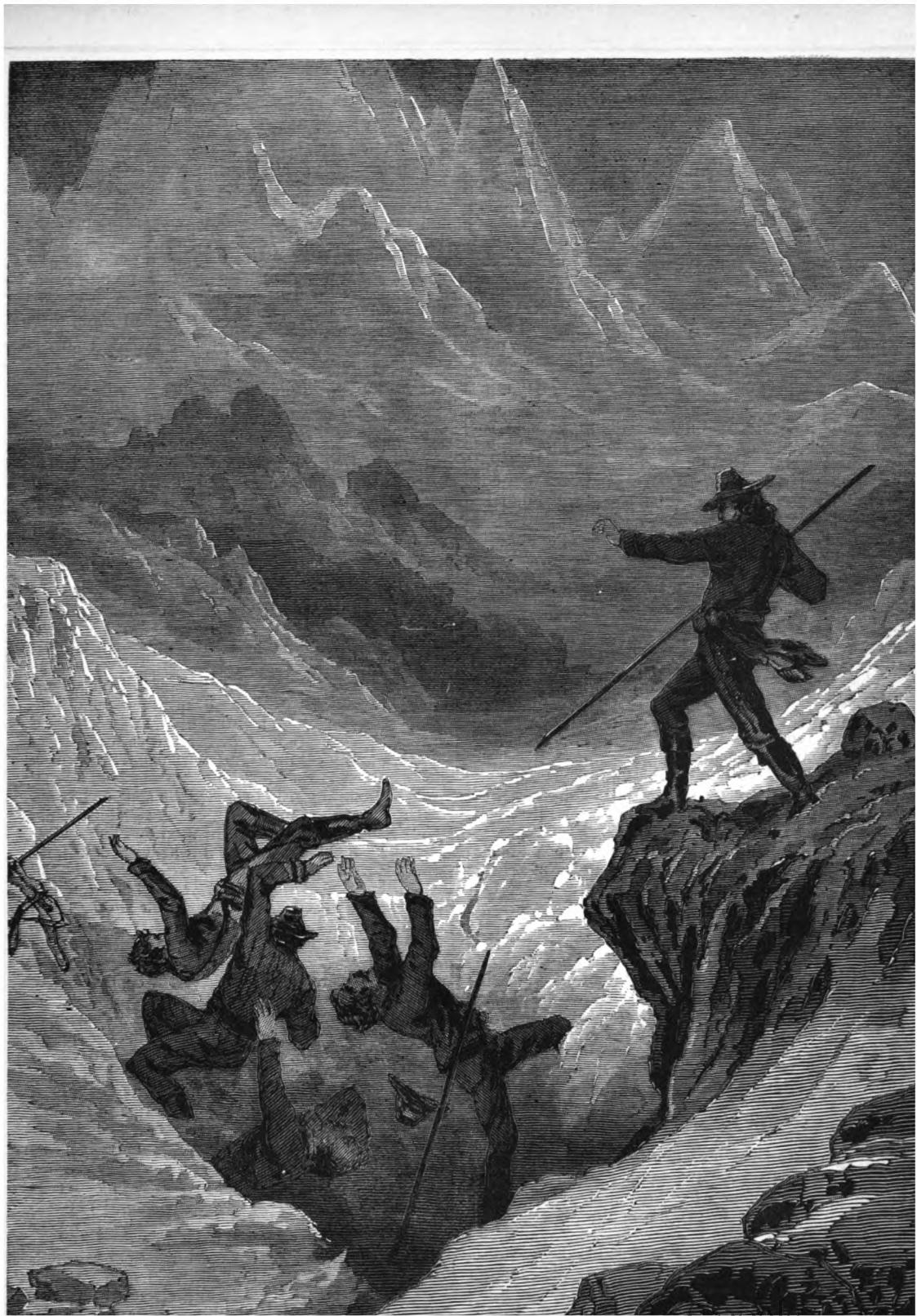
As I said, I had risen to the occasion quite fifty feet, and was still ascending, when something passed me.

It was the capote lent by Mustapha, of Nancyville, to Rublu Pacha, and the latter was in full chase of it.

"Good-bye, dear boy," he exclaimed, stretching out his hand.

But before I could seize it he was off, though I was pretty close behind.

It was a curious sensation, and not at all unpleasant after the first shock, which was decidedly too



sudden. That passed, I felt as if I was inflated—bird-like, aerial—and floated upwards deliciously, the only unpleasantry being the rapid falling of small and heavy things which had achieved the height to which they had been propelled, and were returning.

I managed to dodge the governors of the steam engine, a boiler plate, two Turkish sailors' heads, and what seemed to me like a dozen bottles of hair restorer; and then, as I was still ascending, but much more slowly, I began to think, for the first time, of the consequences of coming down.

Where should I fall? Would it be on land or in the blue Danube once more?

I asked myself a dozen such questions, and as I got to the eleventh I found myself stationary, apparently suspended in mid-air, and then I began to fall—at first slowly, then increasing in speed, till, to my horror, I turned completely over, and came down head first at a frightful rate.

Now, kindly take notice of this, that I turned completely over, and began to descend, head first. I draw your attention to it to show you how great must be the preponderance of brain in my cranium, since its weight caused this revolution.

The speed grew so great at last that I nearly lost my breath before, cleaving the air like a flash, I descended into the river with a "chuck," going down without a splash, like the round stones we used to propel so as to make what we called a rotten egg in the water.

That was the worst part of it, for it seemed an hour before I reached the bottom, plunging my arms into the mud right to my elbows, and then, to my horror, remaining stationary, as if planted upside down, the stream bearing me somewhat sidewise.

"Well," I said to myself, "this cannot last long," and I tried to extricate myself, but vainly, for the more I strove the tighter I stuck in the unctuous mud.

I saw the peril of my position only too plainly, for the sun had evidently risen; and as that beautiful idyllic poem says—

"The sun's perpendicular heat
Had illuminated the depths of the sea."

I quote no farther, as the lines are not appropriate. Suffice it that the sun's rays made the bottom quite plain, and set me thinking.

You have often heard about the thoughts of a lifetime being crowded into a few moments' space.

It was so here, only more so—very much more so; but believe me, the prevailing thought was of your disappointment, and how unfortunate it was that, at the very commencement of my series of stirring adventures, I should be, so to speak, turned into an occupant of the rapid stream.

I fought very hard for my life, and did my best to keep out the water; but human endurance has its limits. I had done what Mustapha would have called my level best to get out of the mud, but in vain; and at last I was growing resigned, and beginning to ask myself "What next?" after the fashion of the French waiters, who will keep on saying *après* when you are ordering your dinner, when my meditations were rudely interrupted by something heavy and hard, which seemed to hook me on the

shoulder between my neck and my biceps. Then it gave me a tremendous wrench, and I was free.

"The fluke of an anchor, by all that's joyful!" I exclaimed, as I gave a vigorous kick, which sent me to the surface in time to draw breath once more; and, directly after, I was swimming quickly towards the shore.

By the way, if I were you, I should make it a *sine quid non* that all my correspondents learned to swim. It is a most useful accomplishment; as I have always found, and it never stood me in greater stead than on the Danube.

Five minutes later I was crawling up the southern bank, where, to my great joy, I found Rublu Pacha and Mustapha sitting quietly side by side, drying themselves in the sun.

"Ah, Solomon—glad to see you, dear boy," said the pacha. "No bones broken, I hope. You're just in time; there's an araba coming up to take us to my tent."

"Thanky," I said, with a shiver. "How about your crew, friend Mustapha?" I said.

"Well, how about them?" he said, making himself a cigarette.

"All saved?" I asked.

"Nary one," he replied. "How could they be? They were all in bits, every one of them. We three are the only whole ones left; but it don't matter."

"Don't matter!" I said, aghast at his cold-blooded speech.

"Not a bit," he said. "Why, there isn't a man of the lot who won't be to-night in Mahomet's paradise, with houris and singing girls, and scent, and flowers, and everything they could wish for."

"Oh," I said, I'm afraid with something of a sneer.

"Well, ask any true believer," he said. "I guess this is about the most comfortable religion going. I've tried several, and I ought to know."

"Bah!" I exclaimed; for I was wet, cold, and cross.

"Oh, I reckon I don't want you to believe if you don't feel disposed. Ask the pacha there; or, if you like it better, try it for a spell."

"I? Try it? Try this Mahomedanism? Sir, you insult me."

"Take a cigarette, then," he said, coolly. "Oh, here's the carriage."

Glad enough I was to see it; and in a quarter of an hour we were comfortably clothed once more, and partaking of a cheering breakfast, one which we needed sadly.

The commander-in-chief was a little put out about the loss of the two vessels when he came to Rublu's tent, and swore a little—not much; but he ended by saying that it was the fortune of war, and that it was good for the boat-builders.

"You'd better get another launch out as soon as you can, Lieutenant Mustapha," he said, at parting. "I shall look to you to make the giaours pay very dearly for the mischief they have done."

"All right," said Mustapha, coolly; "but I haven't got my breath yet after my blow up."

In the course of the day I received a hint from Rublu that there was something on at one of the fortresses; so I went there with him, and, getting

my glass into action, I watched the firing, and saw the effect of the shot upon the Russians.

A scurvy lot, sir—a rough lot, these Muscovites.

I dare say I should think the same of the Turks if I were correspondent on the other side; but as I am with the Turks, and eat salt daily with Rublu—when we can get it—of course I believe most strongly in the success of the Sultan—a man who, with his predecessors, I most sincerely respect, and justly so when I come to consider how liberally they have paid for advances of money, leaving the per centage to be settled by the lender—a fact which shows how thoroughly the true gentleman is in their composition.

It may be said, "If he is a gentleman, why don't he pay his debts?"

This is, of course, absurd. What gentleman ever does pay his debts? Why, every tradesman does that—when he can. When he can't, why he must be a rogue.

We stood watching the firing for some time—now to see the shot ricochetting and dipping on the water, to rise and dash over the farther bank, and scatter the Russians like chaff—infantry and Cossacks, they had that day a regular Russia leathering, driving every man at last to hide himself from the hail that was sent amongst them—now to watch the delicious curve of a shell, as it described its parabola.

By the way, I never heard a shell describe its parabola, or do anything else but emit a kind of shrieking noise, like an owl with a sore throat out mooning on a summer night. In fact, I have not the least idea what a parabola is, unless it's an Italian parable. But there, let that rest. Shells do describe parabolas, and as it's the correct thing to say so, *Be chesm*, as my Turkish friends say, *Narghili, rutan, sheitanski*, as I have before observed.

I have often mentioned to you how truly gentlemanly the Turks are, and how animated by a tender-hearted compassion towards their foes. To more fully exemplify this, let me say that out of fifty shots fired at bodies of infantry to-day, not one was aimed so as to hit; the Turkish gunners continuing to frighten the poor Russians almost into fits, by going excessively near, and then holding their hands—metaphorically, of course.

Well, sir, this tenderness of heart, this gentle compassion towards their enemies, they show even in the way in which they shell their foes.

We—I mean you Christians—make all sorts of diabolical—if diabolical is too strong, cut it out, and substitute demoniacal or fiendish. Don't put it devilish, it sounds vulgar, and I like to be particular)—dodges with your shells, with time and percussion fuses, so that they shall burst and scatter ruin, destruction, and small pieces of iron all around. The Turks, *au contraire*, fire here their shells with such precision and care that they none of them burst, but fall like cold shot.

This is really kind, you know, for, besides the disquieting nature of the operation, see what damage they would do.

The firing, however, has been very hot; for the Russians had the bad taste to fire back again, to such an extent that we had to move Rublu's tent,

one shell pitching right into the divan—divin' into it, in fact.

So hot has the firing been to-day that I have been wishing that the Russians would use chilled Palliser shell.

Things are at last coming to a head, as my maternal aunt used to say of the brocoli. By means of my glass, I can make out the Russians busy making their bridge—a pair of bridges, in fact—across what seems to be quite a pool in the river, and a grand mercantile idea has occurred to me.

I am your Correspondent, but you will freely own that my stipend is not so vast that it should preclude my trying to increase it by a little speculation. I have tried a little in scent packets, tooth combs, rings, and a few sundries; but it don't pay. In fact, it takes up half my time to protect my pack from those accursed sons of Sheitan—bless 'em—the Bashi-Bazouks.

My plan, then, is this—a genuine flash of commercial brilliancy; and if you will send me out the needful, sir, you shall have the plan—I mean produce.

Do I mean money by needful?

Nothing of the kind, sir, but mechanism. Therefore, sir, apply instanter to the Waterloo Bridge Company for a couple of their old turn-tables. Don't buy; borrow, if you can, and send them out at once. I'll set them up at the end of the Russian bridges. Toll, one kopeck. Result, supposing the Russian invading army to number three hundred thousand men, an immense fortune, sufficient to enable us to buy Kensington House, and get up companies.

Six hours have passed since I wrote the above.

I went with Rublu Pacha and Mustapha, the lieutenant, to see into the possibility of setting up the toll barriers at the end of the bridges; for Rublu took to it directly.

"We may as well get a little out of them," he said; "for they declared that they were paying their way."

As his help will be necessary, I accepted; and then Mustapha, who ought to have been looking after a torpedo launch, but was not, became mighty affectionate, and came too.

By the Golden Horn, sir, we had hardly got within a mile of the place, when a dozen Cossacks—hideous, greasy, red-bearded, hairy fellows—leaped up from round a samovar, or tea urn, seized us, and, instead of murdering us on the spot, stuck their lances, X fashion, in the ground, bound us all to them, hands and ankles, like so many Saint Andrews on their crosses, and then set to to finish their tea.

This coolness was too much for me, sir; for, after bearing my ignominious position for about ten minutes, I contrived to get my wrists free; this done, I cut loose my ankles, and set free my comrades.

The Cossacks were too busy over their tea to notice our proceedings; and we should have got free off, departing as we were on tiptoe, when Rublu stopped short, to our utter horror, and gave forth a stentorian sneeze—one of those startlers which go off like a bray.

"Bless the king!" he said, and was preparing to sneeze again, when Mustapha gave him a clap on the back, and cried "Run."

It was quite time; for already half a dozen lances were levelled at him, and his fate seemed to be that he must be trussed like a lark or the gentle quail.

Not to be done, I made a dash for it, but was brought to bay up against the mud wall of a house by a mounted Cossack, who stood levelling his lance at my chest.

Si Slocum; or, the American Trapper and his Dog.

CHAPTER XLV.—JACK'S JOURNEY ENDS.

THE night passed peacefully enough, and the dog did not move till just at sunrise, when, on Jerry raising his head and yawning, Jack leaped up, bounding about and barking.

"Dah, what I tell you lass night, sah?" cried Jerry, who had slept as sound as a top all night, and who now looked indignantly at the dog—"what I tell you, sah, 'bout dem tickle flea? I speck I hardly sleep wink all de night for um. You dirty rascal, why you no keep yourself clean?"

Jack barked eagerly, and leaped about.

"Well, I speck I let you off dis time, 'cause you keep good watch all night, so dat's all. Well, Freddie, how you sleep?"

"I don't know," said the boy. "Jerry, have you got any more bread and bacon?"

"Just hark at dat boy," said Jerry, grinning. "Why, I speck Jack eat all de rest."

As he spoke, he watched the boy's disappointed face, ending by bringing out the wallet and giving the little fellow a hearty meal, his own being a crust and a draught of water.

"I guess I hab big go in at somefin, soon as I get back," he said.

And then, Jack having been remembered, the dog ran on to the track of the night before, and stood watching them.

"Come along, Jerry," said the boy. "Jack's going to show us the way to father."

"You tink he play tricks, Mass' Freddie, an' get us up de mountain, an' den turn round an' laugh at us?"

"No, no—he can find him," said the boy, confidently. "Hey, Jack! find your master. Go on, then, good dog."

Jack gave a suppressed bark, and a bound forward; and then, for hour after hour, it was one sheer climb from narrow shelf to shelf of the nearly perpendicular wall of rock. More thoughtful people would have looked at the height in horror, and dared not have attempted the climb; but the black only studied the fatigue, while the boy's thoughts were centred in following the dog, as he steadily climbed on and on.

"You hold tight, Freddie boy," said Jerry, as they paused again and again to rest. "You let go, an' fall, you nebber 'top till you get to de bottom, and den you hurt yourself."

This was probable, as the fall would, when he

spoke, have been one of close upon a thousand feet.

Sometimes they got up forty or fifty feet easily, then it was a terrible and awfully dangerous climb; but the dog still went on, leaping from stone to stone, and going along ledges too small to contain poor Jerry's feet.

And still they ascended, resting when breathless, but always going on with a good heart.

More than once their journey seemed to have ended, so steep would be the bit of smooth rock above them; but Jerry, who had long before discarded his shoes, thrust his toes into the interstices of the stone, and managed to climb up, holding down his hand afterwards—in one instance a leg—for the boy to clamber by; and still they went on.

"I wonder wedder Jack know where he take us?" panted Jerry, as they had another rest.

"He knows," cried the boy. "Look, look, Jerry—see," he continued, pointing upwards.

"What, dat ah hole?" said Jerry, looking upwards.

"Yes, that's where he's making for."

"Now, boy, dat all stuff and nonsense; your faher nebber climb up a place like dat ah. Dat tree hundred feet more up, an' I sure I can't climb dah."

"Yes, yes, try," said the boy—"that's the place, come along."

The dog was now far above them, waiting; and Jerry and the boy started together, each choosing his own part of the smooth rock face.

But for the rough plants that grew here and there, ascent would have been impossible; and in the most fearless way the boy set himself to scale the remainder of the height, so as to reach the hole he could see above him.

Fortunately there was a tiny shelf or two, and after resting on these, Freddie, with Jerry far below, managed to reach the top of the smooth piece of rock, while the dog went on climbing the next fifty feet or so which intervened between him and the hole.

Jerry climbed very cautiously now, for this was the worst bit they had encountered, and the wonder was that the dog had managed to surmount it.

The boy waited for Jerry to join him, looking down at his black, glistening face till it was within half a dozen feet of where he himself clung.

"Dah!" said Jerry. "I speck dat de most dreffle bit dis chile ebber climb on—oh, lor! Good-bye, Freddie, boy, I going back."

For just then his feet slipped, and he hung alone by his hands for a few seconds, before they too slipped from the rock, and Jerry went down with a rush, fortunately to be brought up standing on the shelf from which he had last started.

Jack, well trained as he was, could hardly suppress a bark, but he only uttered a low whine.

"Are you hurt, Jerry?"

"No, sah, not so berry bad," came up from below. "But I guess I no climb dat ole bit 'gain if I try. Can you get up de ress ob de way, boy?"

"Yes, yes," whispered the little fellow, preparing for a fresh start, the rest of the way being easy.

And taking his rifle in his hand, for it had hitherto

been slung from his back, he followed the dog, and saw him disappear in the hole.

The boy hesitated for a few moments, thinking that perhaps, after all, some fierce animal might be there, Jack having been trained to lead his master to the haunts of the bear and deer; but directly after he climbed up the rest of the way, scrambled on to the ledge of the hole, and stood, with his hand shading his eyes, gazing in.

Then, for a moment, he glanced down, seeing Jerry a long distance below, sitting upon a narrow ledge, fifty feet or so to his left.

The next minute he had plunged cautiously into the darkness, closely following the dog.

CHAPTER XLVI.—RETRIBUTION.

THERE was more rustling and scratching by the opening, and as Kate Townsend knelt there with her hands clasped, what followed seemed to her like a dream.

For there, in the little spot of light, she saw the head of a dog appear; then the beast seemed to scramble up, stand full in view for a moment, snuffing and looking in, wagging its tail the while.

Si uttered a chirp, and the dog ran in, crossed the intervening space, and the next moment had leaped up, with its paws on Si Slocum's breast, trying to lick his face.

"Down, Jack! Hark!" whispered Si, hoarsely. "Fetch them, boy—fetch them!"

For he divined that help was at hand.

The dog bounded towards the opening, just as Kate saw, framed out there against the light, the figure of Si Slocum's boy, his little rifle in one hand, standing stooping in the opening, shading his eyes, trying to pierce the darkness.

Jack was by his side in a moment, turning directly, and the boy followed him boldly in, till the dog led him to his father's side.

"Hark, Freddie, danger, boy, quick!" whispered Si. "Lie down with Jack behind that bit of rock, and neither of you move till I chirp."

Without a word the well-trained boy stepped lightly to the great stone three or four yards from his father, lay down, taking Jack's head on his lap, and waited.

They were hardly hidden before Jake Bledsoe came softly in, looked at the fire, blew it, and then stood listening.

A snarl from the dog, even a movement from the beast that lay crouching, recognizing an old enemy, and longing to pin him by the throat, would have betrayed them; and for a few minutes the fate of the prisoners was hanging by a hair over the precipice of death.

Then Jake began to mutter, huskily—

"Snags! he aint coming, and I must have another drop."

He slunk out again; and, as he passed from the place, Si uttered a faint chirp.

Freddie and the dog were at his side in a moment.

"Jack," whispered Si, "go out, sir, and wait."

"Go on!" said Freddie, in his childish treble.

And the dog ran quickly to the opening, passed through, and lay down outside.

"There's a knife on that grindstone, my boy," whispered Si. "Quick, cut me loose."

The boy was too well trained to speak. He ran to the grindstone, saw the knife shining in the twilight, caught it up, and, inserting the point carefully between his father's wrists, proved that Jake Bledsoe was right; for, even with his weak little hands, he easily cut through the thongs.

"Now give it me," said Si, as his hands dropped to his sides. "No," he added, with a groan, "I have no feeling in my hands; go on, boy—my feet and my legs."

The boy stooped down, cut his father's legs and ankles free, and, as he did so, Si nearly fell forward heavily upon his face.

"I shall be better soon," he panted, keeping the erect position solely by leaning back against the pillar, so utterly useless did his limbs feel. "Now, quick, boy, put the knife in my hand. No, no, the other way up—push the blade up my sleeve."

The boy obeyed, and waited for further orders.

"Lay your rifle down, Freddie, out of sight, ready to pick up as you go back to the mouth of the cave."

"Yes, father."

"Who is there?"

"Jerry; but he can't climb up so high."

"Good boy," panted Si; for his senses were reeling, and his head seemed on fire as the circulation began to be restored. "Now, you see that opening?"

"Yes, father."

"Go in—never mind the dark—and you will feel about for tubs of powder. Find one that is open, and upset it—scatter it about the floor all over, as quickly as you can. If there are two do the same, and so on if there are three; but without making a sound. Then crawl out on your hands and knees, get your rifle, and if there is any one here mind he don't see you. You understand?"

"Yes, father; but—"

"But you are to spread the powder about, boy, and go out from that hole. Take Jack with you, join Jerry, get two hundred yards away and wait. If you don't see me again, join your mother. Quick!"

As he whispered that last word, Jake Bledsoe entered the place; and Kate, who had been an eager listener and spectator, uttered a cry of terror.

It took off Jake Bledsoe's attention, and he muttered something about "needn't be so skeart."

By the time he glanced at Si, little Freddie was crawling on his face to the powder cave, and Si just saw his little figure disappear.

"Let me see," said Jake, going to the brazier. "Yes, capitally hot—just right. You'll see stars directly, friend Si, more than that nigger of yours made me see when he hit me, after I had been to lay that trap for you at your house. Let me see—where did I put that knife?"

He searched about for a few minutes, uttering exclamations of vexation, ending by going down upon his knees, and looking about the floor.

"I could ha' swore I lay it on the edge of that frame," continued Jake, with drunken wisdom; "and as it aint here, and aint on the frame, and aint between my teeth, why, I must have put it on the whiskey keg out there."

The sound of a cask being overturned, and the swishing noise of something being thrown about, was plainly heard; but Jake was too drunk to make out what it was.

"They're going it out there. Cuss it, where's the knife? Sharp as I made it too! You aint got it, have you, lovey? No, you couldn't reach it. It's lying on the whiskey keg. I'll go and get it, for here he comes."

Si's heart was in his mouth, for he could hear plainly every movement of his boy; and, knowing what he did, it was plain to him that the boy had found three open kegs, if not more, and scattered their contents about the floor.

Then there was a faint rustling, and he just saw the boy for a moment in the dim twilight, before he disappeared again, to be seen once more crawling like a snake into the light of the opening, over whose edge he disappeared.

Si drew a long breath.

"Miss Kate," he said, in a hoarse whisper, "with five minutes of my old strength I could save you. As it is, I'm kinder helpless, like a baby, and can do nothing hardly but send you to heaven, and our enemies to their deserts. You know what Freddie has done?"

"Yes," said Kate, faintly—"you mean to blow the cavern up."

"I do," said Si; "if you give me the word."

"Do it—do it at once, Si," whispered Kate; "I am not afraid to die."

"Hush!"

Si glanced at the white-hot iron, and knew that if he took it and hurled it into the opening on his right there would be a terrific explosion, in which he and his enemies would perish together. So, standing firm, he waited his opportunity of putting his hands behind him round the pole, as though he was still bound, and clasping now pretty firmly the knife that Jake had gone to seek.

Hardly had he done so, before Vasquez, who had evidently been drinking, entered the cavern, followed by about a dozen men.

"Go over there," he said; and the party went and stood on Si Slocum's right, while Vasquez went down on one knee by Kate's side. "Is it to be love or hate, sweet Kate?" he whispered. "Will you save Si Slocum's life, or see him suffer for your cruelty to me? Come, which is it to be?—I trifles no longer."

"Hate and death, villain!" cried Kate, starting back to the full extent of her chain.

And Vasquez leaped up, with a terrible oath.

"Death and hate, and torture, is it, then?" he roared.

And darting to the brazier, he snatched from it the long, fiery-ended bar, which glistened and scintillated like a torch in a demon's hand.

Si did not move, but kept up his attitude of repose, as if still bound to the pillar; and the sunshine now pouring into the cavern through the opening, gave a strange effect to the scene; while Kate watched, huddled down upon her knees, and then, too horrified to gaze, she crept behind the great mass of rock to which her chain was fastened.

"Now, dog," roared Vasquez, "the time for my revenge has come; and I tell you both, that had she

given herself to me you should have died the same, for the tortures you made me endure. Now, lads, see the honest, canting dog wince as he takes his last look at the sun. Another moment, Si Slocum, and you are blind."

Then, masking his rage, so as to give more surety to his deadly, cruel purpose, he leaned towards Si, whose eyes were fixed upon his own, and would have deliberately thrust the white-hot iron into his right orbit, when there was a flash, a yell, and Vasquez fell back, pierced to the heart by the keen-bladed knife that would have executed his vengeance; and ere his followers could recover from their surprise, Si strode from his pillar, seized the red-hot bar, whirled it round his head, and drove the cowardly crew before him towards the opening into the cave.

Si uttered a low, strange laugh, as he saw the direction the ruffians had taken; and then, gathering up his remaining strength, he hurled the red-hot bar past them in the darkness.

It flew by their heads like a fiery star, the effect of hurling it causing Si to stagger back, and fall headlong over one of the rocks that sprinkled the floor.

As he fell, there was a blinding flash, a deafening roar, and it seemed as if chaos had come, with earthquake, thunder, and the bursting-up of the subterranean fires of the world. Then came the noise of hurtling, falling rocks, which descended the mountain side like an avalanche; and a black cloud floated heavenward from the vast rent where once the face of the rock had been smooth, save where a tiny hole had been visible to keen eyes far below.

CHAPTER XLVII.—THE CLEARING AWAY OF THE SMOKE.

ON creeping out of the hole into the broad sunshine, Freddie had found Jack crouching close below, ready to give him a friendly tail-wag of welcome; and then, in obedience to his father's orders, the boy signalled to the dog to follow, and cautiously descending, contrived, by choosing a fresh place of descent, to reach the spot where Jerry was waiting.

"Dah," began Jerry, "I knowed dat dog make a fool ob us."

"Hush! keep close, climb along here," whispered Freddie.

And leading the way for a little distance, the three hid themselves behind a projecting rock, which commanded the opening to the cave.

Jerry saw that there was something for result, and he sat, open eyed and mouthed, waiting.

"But you didn't find de boss?" began the black, at last.

"Yes," whispered the boy, "and he said we were to be quiet and wait."

"Oh, be joyful!" cried Jerry, and, catching the dog in his arms, he gave him a hug.

The boy, then, with his lips to the black's ear, told him what he had seen, and what had taken place.

"Why, de lor' ha' mussy, boy," Jerry exclaimed, "he go blow de hull place up wid powder."

Freddie had been so trained by the trapper, his father, that, come what might, he knew he must obey

his orders; and so it was that they waited patiently till the great explosion took place, turning the hole into a great chasm, and, when the dust and smoke cleared away, leaving a far easier ascent up the debris into the cavern.

But it was many hours before Jerry and his young master availed themselves of the ascent. Freddie had been told to wait, and he waited with his companion till towards evening, when, hearing voices, they glanced up, and saw half a dozen men standing at the entrance to the cavern.

"Why, it's young Si Slocum and the nigger," cried one of the party. "Here, hi, boy, come up."

It was the storekeeper who shouted; and recognizing him, Freddie climbed up, to find himself amongst plenty of friends; for half the inhabitants of Randan Gulch, alarmed by the explosion, had ascended the mountain from their own side, to find from their little outpost that the rocks piled at the entrance had been blown out and sent flying, while the mountain rocked as if from an earthquake.

Soon after, first one and then another scorched and blackened wretch had come crawling out—ten in all—to be secured and sent down to the gulch; and at last, when the smoke and dust had passed away, an exploring party went in, to find, after climbing over the rock-strewn floor, twenty dead and dying wretches, and Si Slocum, terribly wounded, but breathing, lying with his head in Kate Townsend's lap.

For she, poor girl, had been saved by crawling behind the great mass of rock; though she sat now, stunned and helpless, ready to stare wonderingly at those who gladly bore her, with the wounded man, down to the gulch.

The enthusiasm exhibited by the mining people when poor Kate was taken up to her old resting-place at the storekeeper's was tremendous as the joy at the destruction of the gang that had worked so much mischief and caused the death of so many honest men. For, upon careful examination, it was found that Jake Bledsoe lay dead but a short distance from the body of Vasquez, whilst Coyote Tobe only lingered for a few hours in the temporary hospital that had been prepared for the reception of the wounded.

Si Slocum's injuries were bad, but not of a serious nature, he having escaped, where he fell, the terrible blast of the powder; and having been, like Kate, miraculously preserved from the falling rock that had been hurled up and shattered by the explosion.

The injured men of Vasquez's gang were allowed to depart as fast as they recovered sufficiently, with the understanding that their lives were forfeit if ever they showed their faces more at the gulch. In fact, the destruction of this party of marauders was the principal step to Randan Gulch becoming a great rising city; much of its prosperity being due, not to the gold mines, but to the Ranch Silver Mines, twenty miles south, the property of Wallace Foster and Si Slocum.

For, with Kate on the one hand and Ruth on the other, nursing back into health followed as a matter of course, and the ranch once more bloomed into health and wealth.

Wallace Foster found the silver ore far exceed his

most sanguine expectations, and, with Mr. Townsend's help, as soon as he recovered from his injuries, mining operations were commenced, Si accepting all and every arrangement made by Wallace as a matter of course, while they were able to help their friend the storekeeper to make a large fortune by supplying their operatives.

The glad feature of the opening of the Ranch Mine was what Mr. Townsend called the silver wedding, and Mickey Doran the brass.

The former was, of course, that of Wallace and Kate Townsend; while the brass wedding was that of Mickey and Patsey, who declared her suitor was the most impudent man she guessed she ever see, and she didn't like him half well enough to have him; but she had him all the same, to the great delight of Jerry, who showed more teeth than it could have been thought possible any man could possess.

And so the story of Si Slocum ends amidst peace and prosperity, the ranch being the centre of quite a little hamlet of pretty houses, occupied by those who were connected with the mine. Si's place, however, was but little altered; for though he was very wealthy, he declared himself happiest with his homely pursuits, and his dog and gun, Jack being ever as faithful a companion as the mustang.

Ruth says it will rest with little Freddie to come the gentleman. As to that, time only could show; and of its doings in this direction the writer has never heard a word.

THE END.

POISON FISHES.—A very poisonous fish is found on the coast of Borneo, and common to the rivers in Sarawak. The fish is called the ikam buntal, and is by no means pleasant to look at, being flabby and covered with short spines, having the power of blowing itself out in a globular form, and when handled in this state it emits a sound something like a grunt. Lately, thirteen persons had been seized with symptoms of poisoning after eating the roe of the buntal. Three of the sufferers succumbed to the effects of the poison, and were lying dead; the remaining ten were saved by careful medical treatment. The appearance presented by those attacked and who recovered were—dilated pupils, blueness of lips, spasms of throat, contractions of the limbs, stertor, with greatly lowered temperature. In those who died the tongue was white and mottled, the mouth showing a peculiar blueness. The time which elapsed from eating the fish to that of death was from twenty minutes to half an hour. In searching for parallel cases, it was found that, some years ago, two sailors were poisoned from eating a small portion of the liver of the same kind of fish (*Tetraodon solandri*) at the Cape of Good Hope, and died in seventeen minutes. Large quantities are eaten by the Malays and Dyaks, "who have many peculiar superstitions connected with the mode of cooking," in which, perhaps, may be found the secret of the immunity enjoyed, as a rule, from the effects of the fish. One of the remedies in which the natives have much faith is the curious process of placing the sufferer on a platform of sticks, on which the fish is smoked, and keeping up a good fire underneath, sufficiently guarded not to burn the body.

The Egotist's Note-book.

MR. MAY has been defending the tramway bells, which really are a perfectly useless nuisance. If Mr. May succeeds in his agitation on behalf of the jingling, jangling, tuneless worries of horse and man, let me suggest that he be presented with a testimonial in the form of a gold coral and bells. The coral might be omitted or retained—reference being had to the state of Mr. Thomas May's gums.

The Chinese ambassador made his appearance the other day in the Court of Appeal. The usher whispered to one of the judges, who whispered to another man, and so on, until the whole Bench was informed of what was about to happen. Then entered the Chinese ambassador and his suite, all of whom chin-chinned, while their lordships gravely saluted in return. Ten minutes of the proceedings were enough for his Excellency, who, on retiring, shook hands gravely with each and all the judges, and wound up by shaking hands with the usher, whom he appeared to consider the most important man in the place. The usher was, apparently, the person who least enjoyed the joke.

General Devel! What a name for a soldier, with his minions in the shape of twenty-four pounders, vomiting shot and shell! We don't spell it that way; but it may be good Russian for the unnameable. I wish the Russian Emperor joy of his servant!

Punch made a good hit the other day at the shop-walking nuisance, where the blatant, hirsute individual tells the quiet, gentle girl that she is kept to sell that which is in the shop, not what people want. The linendraper's shopwalker of to-day, every lady friend tells us, is a perfect pest; for, watched by his "rolling eye," the assistants are bound to worry every customer to buy, not what she wants, but that which is in the shop. Let a lady ask for some particular article that is not in stock, and she is assured that it is not made now—a fact that, at a sign, that noble specimen of humanity, the shopwalker, hastens to endorse. The advice I ventured to give was—"Don't visit such establishments again."

The *Daily News* gives the following advertisement:—

"A good general servant wanted, who understands plain cooking and making butter in a small family."

Far better make it in a churn.

The City of London officialism always seems to be associated with jovial hospitality and the enjoyment of life. This even extends itself to the police-court, where a wrong-doer is generally heard by a genial mayor or alderman: while the police van, unlike its metropolitan brethren, is not only not so black, but its driver and guardian are jolly of aspect—a result brought about evidently by their taste for the best ale on the road. The City police van never stops at common public-houses; but as soon as its freight is discharged, there is a halt at the spots where good "home-brewed" is vended. But why

not before the van is emptied? There used to be a bowl passed to the criminal on his way to Tyburn, somewhere about the spot where the Holborn Viaduct stands. The riders in the civic 'bus would welcome it to a man.

Captain and Mrs. Jones were an ill-assorted couple, and their quarrellings were a source of continued annoyance to their friends.

"Hallo," exclaimed young Wynter, running into Jones's club the other night, "here's a new scandal!"

"What's the matter?"

"Jones has been caught making love to—"

"Whom?" shouted half a dozen voices.

"His wife."

A wealthy lady, who had just buried her husband, decided to reduce her establishment.

"I shall have to dismiss you," said she to her *femme de chambre*.

"Dismiss me, madam!" cried the latter, astonished—"me, who was so kind to master!"

"Yes," replied the widow, "that's just it. That's the very reason; and since he's dead now, you won't be wanted any more."

Tennyson says that "simple faith" is worth more than the possession of Norman blood. I commend to the notice of the Poet Laureate the following instance, in which faith is carried to the extreme verge of simplicity:—

"TO THE BENEVOLENT.—Will any gentleman, who has been successful in business, help advertiser in starting a profitable concern? He has no security whatever to offer, but very good references."

If a number of gentlemen could be induced to help advertiser with a few hundreds each, it would no doubt be a very profitable concern—to the advertiser.

"The real difficulty nowadays," said a novelist to a friend, "when we hear of such extraordinary crimes and scandals, is not to invent incidents, but to describe them in such a manner as to bring fiction at all into comparison with the reality."

Apropos of the golden hair which was recently so fashionable, a young gentleman ingenuously admitted that the beautiful locks of his fiancée suddenly turned so terribly red that he was compelled to wear green spectacles when he kissed her.

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

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The Domestic Confessions of Mrs. Chignal.

THE SIXTH.

"THERE goes Kesiah's appetite," said Alfred.

"How about your policeman now?"

"And how about your soldier, Mr. Clever?" I said, rather spitefully, for of course it was disappointing.

"Well, shall I go down?" said Alfred.

"No," I replied; "it is the duty of a mistress to attend to the shortcomings of her maid. If it were a footman or groom, of course you could interfere."

"Very well, ma'am," he said, closing the front door very softly, "but go at once."

I certainly felt very nervous; but knowing that my dignity was at stake I went boldly downstairs, of course as softly as I could, and paused for a moment at the kitchen door, listening just as a giggle and squeak came through the keyhole.

Of course I could not enter then, so I waited for a minute, and then turned the handle sharply and walked in.

Just as I expected, there was a hearty supper spread for the shabby-looking man, and madam Rachel was carving for him and pressing him to eat.

I never was so taken aback in my life—not, of course, at seeing the man there, for I expected to meet him, but at the cool impudence of that girl—I should say woman—Rachel.

"Well, I'm sure!" she exclaimed, for all the world as if I had been intruding, and not walking into my own kitchen. Then, before I had had time to speak—"If you please, 'm, I didn't hear you ring."

"No, Rachel," I said, firmly, "I did not ring, I came down to see—"

"Who I'd got here," said Rachel, spitefully, and the man never attempted to move; "if you must know, 'm, it's a friend o' mine."

"Then I must request your friend to leave immediately, Rachel," I said, growing all of a tremble, for the girl was so fierce, and the man looked so cross, that I grew alarmed.

"He's going, 'm, as soon as he has had his supper; and if things is a-coming to this pass, the sooner I goes with him the better, say I."

Here Rachel gave herself a wriggle in her clothes, and tightened up her lips as if holding herself back from biting.

"I have no wish to prevent your leaving my service, Rachel, at a proper time and place," I said; "that is, if you choose to be so foolish."

That was, of course, weakness on my part, for I should have taken higher ground. Rachel saw this, and seized her opportunity.

"I goes now, 'm, if there's to be any nonsense of this sort!" she exclaimed; and all the time, as if he had not seen anything to eat before for a week, and totally ignoring my presence, if that horrible man did not go on eat, eat, eating in a voracious way that thoroughly explained poor Kesiah's appetite.

"Of all the strange behaviour that I ever saw on the part of a servant, Rachel, I must say this is some of the strangest," I said, indignantly.

"Some people don't deserve to have no servants,

because they're no better themselves," said the girl, defiantly; for she evidently felt that she would be dismissed, and acted accordingly.

I plucked up spirit at this, and exclaimed—

"Rachel, I desire that you send this person out of the house directly, before I summon your master."

"And I'll summons you, mum, if you don't pay me my month's wages this minute, for I aint agoing to stop here to be trampled on, so I tell you. Look here, Missus Chignal, as you calls yourself," continued the horrible creature—and if she didn't snatch off her chignon and cap, and throw them on the dresser amongst the vegetable dishes, and let down her back hair—there wasn't much—"look here, Missus Chignal, you thinks a deal of yourself, I desay, but some people as you tries to tread under your foot is as good as you—there, smell that!"

To my utter astonishment, if the woman did not drag up her dress and rummage in a great pocket like a saddle bag for a dirty little leather purse, out of which she picked a ring, and stuck it on her finger.

"There," she cried, as she stuck it in my face and requested me to smell it, "as good as you are, fine as you thinks yourself—married woman, mum."

"And pray, who is this person, Rachel?" I said, indignantly, turning to the man, who took not the slightest notice of us, but went on eating as if he was never to have another meal as long as he lived.

"This pusson, mum," said the woman, with her voice getting higher in pitch as well as louder in tone, "this pusson, mum, is my 'usban', mum, and I should like to know what you've got to say agin him."

"That we're not going to keep him at our expense, Mrs. Rachel," said Alfred's voice; and I really felt then like Wellington must have felt at Waterloo, when he heard the Prussians coming up to his help.

Never before did I feel so thoroughly how cruel nature has been to us; for, no matter how the strong-minded women may talk, they cannot impress people like the pard-bearded man. Here had I been talking away for ten minutes without the slightest effect; but no sooner was Alfred's voice heard than the horrible man that wicked Rachel called her 'usban' gave a dreadful start, just as he was placing a piece of cold beef as large as a potato in his mouth, and the consequence was that he jerked the beef into his throat and stuck the fork in his mouth; beginning the next moment to choke and gasp in a hideous way with his mouth wide open, and his eyes getting more and more like a lobster's every moment.

"Oh, Dick!" shouted Rachel, flying to him, "eat some bread, drink some beer."

And she began to hammer his back frantically; but without having the slightest effect, for the man began to turn black in the face.

How dreadful, I thought; and in the next few moments I began to see in advance all sorts of horrors—doctors performing operations, juries sitting on his body, and a shocking funeral, with a long account of it in the newspapers.

"Let him sit up," cried Alfred. "Confound the

man, how dare you come and choke yourself in my house, and with my beef?"

"It's a shame—it's a cruel shame!" shrieked the woman, as she kept on hammering at her 'usban's back. "If I'd ha' known as we was to be treated like this, I'd never ha' darkened your doors, that I wouldn't."

The man now looked horrible, and I felt that I was having a nightmare as he rolled off the chair on to the kitchen floor.

"Here, the fellow will be choked directly," cried Alfred, running to him.

"An' it's all your doing," sobbed Rachel, seizing the man's arm and moving it up and down as though it was the handle of a pump—just as if—stupid creature!—that was likely to do the slightest good.

"You good-for-nothing hussey, how dare you!" cried Alfred; and without a moment's hesitation he dragged the man up and gave him a punch in the back which made his head give a jig back, and the creature exclaimed—

"Swallered it!"

Here Rachel began to cry in a most dismal manner, and the strange man began to rub his throat.

"I say, guv'nor," he said, huskily, "yer didn't ought to go on like that there."

"You scoundrel!" cried Alfred. "How dare you come pillaging my house like this? I'll give you into custody."

"Stow that, guv'nor," said the fellow, coolly. "I only came to see the missus."

"Is this woman your wife, then?" said Alfred.

"That's so," said the man.

"Then why do you let her go out to service?"

"'Cause I'm outer work," said the fellow, coolly.

"Then when you're out of work," said Alfred, "we are to keep you, eh?"

"Lor', no," said the fellow, grinning. "The snack as I gets here wouldn't keep me, sir. I want a deal more than that at a regular meal."

I'm sure he had eaten a couple of pounds of our beautiful beef.

"But you know, guv'nor, as well as the missus, there's plenty here, and you never misses a scrap or two as goes to make a pore man comfortable."

"What's in that handkerchief?" said Alfred, pointing to a bundle on the dresser.

"Dirty clothes," said Rachel, firing up, and making a rush towards them.

But to reach the bundle she would have had to pass me and dear Alfred, who coolly took the bundle and placed it on the table, before proceeding to untie the knots of the handkerchief.

"Which it's on'y a scrap or two of broken wittles," said the man. "Don't go on like that, guv'nor—see how you're upsetting the missus!" he continued, pathetically.

"Poor thing," said Alfred, in his sarcastic way. "These victuals don't seem to be broken very small," he continued, as he slowly undid the knots. And when the hideous cotton handkerchief lay open there was a beautiful knuckle of ham, half a chicken, and a whole pork pie, which my lady must have made on purpose for her dear lord.

"I—I—I never was so treated before in my

life," sobbed Rachel. "Call yourselves gentlefolks, indeed! Pay me my wages."

"What an appetite that Keziah has got," said Alfred, sneering at the pair.

And Rachel sobbed so loud that her husband dug his elbow into her side.

"Stow it, will yer?" he said, in a hoarse voice.

"Pay me my wages," sobbed Rachel.

"I don't wonder at the poor girl being sleepy," said Alfred, laughing and making her terribly cross, for he seemed to thoroughly enjoy the whole thing. "I suppose she would have had the credit of devouring all that food, eh?"

"Pay me my wages," sobbed Rachel; and then, in a doleful tone, she cried out, "Oh, why didn't I marry a man? Why didn't I marry a man?"

"Stow that, will yer?" said her husband. "What's the good o' talking such stuff as that, and making the gentleman cross? I aint a woman, am I?"

"Poor thing! she's terribly ill-used," said Alfred, savagely.

And he threw the things out of the handkerchief into the soup-tureen on the dresser.

"Why didn't I marry a man?" sobbed Rachel, shaking her back hair—"one as would protect his wife when she was being trod under foot?"

The man gave a sort of growl.

"One as would take my part, and see fair play for me."

"Take your part — fair play," I said, angrily. "Rachel, I'm ashamed of you!"

"You let the pore woman alone, please," said the man, surlily; "and you jest give me her money, and I'll take her away."

"No, you don't, Dick—oh, no!" exclaimed Rachel, firing up. "Never no more do you have my wages—so there, now!"

She looked so fiercely at her husband that Alfred was in a high state of delight, and there seemed to be every probability of our having a scene; but Alfred, at my suggestion, put a stop to that by going to the kitchen door, opening it, and motioning to our visitor to go.

"There," he said. "You can wait outside if your wife means to go to-night. If not, you had better go."

There was a brief colloquy between the two, and the result was that Rachel preferred to stop for the night; and her lord and master passed out of sight, with a surly "Good night, guv'nor," and we saw him no more.

I should have been disposed to forgive Rachel if she had been penitent and wanted to stay; but so far from it, she grew so uppish and independent during the next fortnight because I allowanceed them for their meals, that I was very glad when she decided to go, and we were once more without.

Heigho! I wonder how many times Aunt Tatlock wrote saying she was coming, and I had to put her off. But what could I do? Nothing would have offended her more than for me to have had her there, and everything to have been in a make-shift fashion.

Keziah went on very well, and, excepting her terrible gurgle-urgles of a night, I had not so very much cause for complaint; and really there was no

need, for during the next three months I used regularly every morning to look at my hair as I combed it to see if it was turning grey through the terrible woman I next had—the one Alfred called the Dragoon.

She was about thirty, and so nice and clean and respectable, so quiet-spoken and retiring, that I declare I felt as if I had found a treasure; and I used to praise up the new registry office to dear Woppy, when he would tell me to wait a bit.

"Why should I wait?" I said, austerely.

"Because you haven't found her out yet."

"Found her out?"

"Yes," he said, roughly, "found her out. She isn't sound."

"Not sound, Alfred?"

"No," he said. "She's broken-winded, or been down, or she's got splints, or something or another."

Just as if the poor woman had been a horse!

"You may say what you like—" I said.

"Thank you," he retorted, sharply.

"Now, don't be so aggravating, Alfred!" I exclaimed. "I was going to observe that you may say what you like, I am quite convinced that we have found a treasure."

"Bury it, then," said Alfred.

For he was in one of his nasty, sneering, mocking humours; and I thought the best thing I could do was to hold my tongue—when if he did not turn upon me, and call me sulky!

We had dinner that night alone, though we had asked a friend of Alfred's, but he did not come; and well was it he did not, for just after the pudding was placed upon the table, and Ellen had taken out the plates and vegetable dishes, we were startled by a most horrible crash.

"There goes the best dinner service," said Alfred, grinning.

And together we ran out, to find—there, how shall I describe what we found?—that poor woman upside down at the bottom of the short flight of stairs going down to the kitchen and breakfast-room.

I said upside down, and I repeat it. The poor woman was upside down amidst the broken plates and dishes; and when we got her face out, there it was all covered with potatoes and greens, and the potatoes had all got into her hair in such a way as never was.

Alfred was in a towering rage, and said she was tipsy.

"You smell her breath," the nasty creature said, just as if I wanted to smell the woman's breath. It was quite enough to get my silk all over cabbage in helping to drag her up and into the kitchen, with the crockery cracking under our feet the whole time.

By the time she was in the kitchen she was able to stare about, and then she told us she slipped on the stairs; when Alfred scolded her, and said he was sure that she had been having something that she had no business to have, and then we went back into the dining-room and finished our dinner.

"I shall never be able to match those plates and dishes, Woppy, dear," I said, pitifully.

"Good job, too," he said, savagely; "good job if they were all broken, and then I could get my dinner in peace at the Whifflers."

The Whifflers, by the way, is the absurd name given by the men of Alfred's set to their body, club, or institution. I have asked Alfred several times why it is called the Whifflers, and only obtain the same answer from him that it is because they whiffle, whatever that may be. I have been obliged to give it up.

He is always seeking for an excuse to get away to his club, and so I told him in tears as soon as dinner was over, when the tantalising man declared it was the only place where he could get a meal in peace, for I always chose the servants either ugly, because my disposition was so jealous, or else incapable, so as to annoy him.

Such remarks were not worthy of an answer; so I said nothing, only saved them up to give him back some day.

I went down into the kitchen, and found Ellen so busy and full of apologies that I said very little more about the breakages; but when I went up to Alfred, I told him I felt sure that the woman was not intoxicated.

"How do you know?" he said, brutally. "How can you tell? You were never tipsy, were you?"

Now, I ask any woman, was not that last question enough to aggravate a saint living in seclusion, with only one shirt, and that hair, and his food herbs and spring water—which, by the way, must have been a very innutritious diet—and how they used to contrive in those days to starch and get up hair shirts is more than I can understand.

But to return. I said no more, only waited, for I knew he would be, or ought to be, sorry for it all some day; and I went on with my work.

Poor Ellen! she was, indeed, not sound. The very next day she was missing, and we couldn't find her for long enough, till I recollect that she had fetched the dining-room scuttle to fill, and that made me think of the coals. So I called Keziah, and there was the poor creature upside down in the cellar, with her head in the scuttle.

It was very dreadful, but all the same it was a peculiarity of Ellen's, she always fell upside down.

I didn't say anything to Alfred about that; I only waited to see if my suspicions were right, and two days afterwards, after ringing for her till I was tired, I went down and found her in the kitchen cupboard—upside down, of course—with her head amongst the bundles of wood and her chignon and cap full of blackbeetles, who were walking about in a great state of astonishment.

Of course it was fits, and I told her so, and she owned to the soft impeachment; but she said in her defence that you only had to set her right way up and give her a shake, and she would go on again all right; which was perfectly true, but wasn't it dreadful!

The worst of it was that she grew worse day after day, and used to have fits all over the place, till what with the dread of what fit she would have next, and where she would have it, and Alfred finding it all out, I got into such a nervous state that I felt sure I should be ill.

"Well," said Alfred one night, and he sent a shiver all through my frame, "now that you are so comfortably settled with a servant"—did you

ever hear such irony of fate?—"why don't you send for your Aunt Tatlock?"

I was just going to reply when Alfred began to sniff.

"Hallo! Eh! Why! What the—I say, there's something burning. Don't you smell it?"

I did, horribly, a dreadful smell of burning, and a terrible fear came over me as Alfred went and opened the drawing-room door, and exclaimed—

"By Jove, the place is on fire!"

"Oh, Woppy," I shrieked, "save the baby."

"And—yes—by Jove, it comes from the kitchen!"

Turkish Wives.

HAVING obtained a wife, it is worth while to inquire how a Turk treats her. I am not aware that she has much to complain of generally from the personal ill-treatment of her husband. I should think, as a rule, that the Turk is a fair husband.

The Turk in ordinary life is not unkind or cruel. The wife's misfortunes arise from her position. As husband and wife see little of each other, they are not specially given to quarrelling. But she is a woman, possibly purchased outright in the slave market; for it is a pure illusion to suppose that the slave trade in Turkey has been abolished, and being a woman she bears about her on every hand the marks of degradation.

It is her duty to wait on her husband, if he is poor, at meals. Her accommodation in the house is inferior to his. In all things she is his slave. If the wife is the daughter of a wealthy man, her lot is not a hard one. As the law regards marriage merely as a partnership, she keeps her own property, and the husband has to be on his good behaviour to obtain a share of it. If she is of poor origin, she can hardly be said to have any rights.

On two or three occasions it has been my lot to travel in the steamers of the Australian Lloyd's when we have had a harem on board. In each case the husband was in the saloon with the rest of us, living well and sleeping in a comfortable cabin. The poor women were penned up as deck passengers, living on wretched food which they had brought with them.

Only a few weeks ago I travelled in a steamer carrying a harem where there were probably twenty women, wives and slaves, who were shivering under canvas, which was quite insufficient to keep out the pelting rain. I know that it is a thing almost unknown for a harem to have cabins taken for it. The husband takes care of himself; has, perhaps, as I remember seeing, unlimited champagne; and leaves his women huddled together on deck to take care of themselves.

To change enemies to friends, treat them with kindness. To change friends to enemies, treat them with liquor.

The following interesting little dialogue was overheard at a ball, one evening during last season, between a young man and his partner who had some difficulty in opening a conversation. "I am very warm," remarked the young lady. "Do you wear flannel?" asked her cavalier, with tender interest.

The War Correspondent.

BY THE WANDERING JEW.

FIFTH LETTER.

I MUST beg of you not to believe one-half of what you hear in the way of telegraphic news, for not a quarter of it is true. This is a secret, of course; but the fact is, the thing is managed. The telegraph clerks are some of them honest enough, but the officials fiddle the wires; and the consequence is that you get accounts of Turkish victories that stagger even me.

That's saying a good deal.

Let me see. You had me last with my back to a wall, waiting for a Russian lancer to pin me if I refused to surrender.

Well, of course I refused to surrender, being a non-combatant; and, to show him my valour, I tore open the breast of my coat, as if to bare my breast. Inadvertently, of course, I laid bare the neck of my flask, with its silver mountings, and then drew it forth, as if to cast it from me.

As I held it out, the thought occurred to me that I might just as well deprive the fierce ruffian before me of the silver top; so I began to unscrew it.

As I did so, a strange look came over my assailant's countenance; and passing his lance into his bridle hand, he drew his right across his lips, smiled, and said, quietly—

"Jist the laste taste, if it's whiskey."

"Why, you contemptible impostor!" I roared.

"I thought you were a Don Cossack."

"Bedad, and it's that same I am."

"Why, you're an Irishman."

"Yis, sur, from Tralee."

"Then what do you mane—mean, I mane—mean by masquerading in the uniform of a Cossack?"

"An' why shouldn't I, sur? But please pass the whiskey."

I involuntarily passed the flask, and he took a long draught, before wiping the top with his fingers, and handing it back.

"Bud that's a rale trate," he said, with his eyes twinkling. "I haven't tasted a drop like that for four years. It's always 'rack here, or else tay. Tay, you know—a confusion of dry leaves and wather. Bedad, it would be worse than the 'rack, only they're both alike, saying that the 'rack's a bit stronger and more nasty."

"But in the name of wonder, Paddy, how came you here?"

"Sure, sur, an' it's the forchin of war. I expict to be made a giniral some day; and as there wasn't the lastest chance in her Majesty's service, why I came out into Roossia, where they made me an officer in a month, and now I shall get fresh promotion for taking you."

"But you're not going to take me, Pat?" I said.

"Shure, an' I have tuk ye," he said.

"I'm a non-combatant, though."

"It's all one to me, darlin', if yere a non compos mentis. Ye're me prisoner."

"Nonsense!" I exclaimed. "I'm a newspaper correspondent, out on my business."

"Look at that, now!" said the fierce-looking ruffian. "I took ye for a Turk."

"Never mind what you took me for," I said; "turn your head the other way, while I shunt."

"An' did ye ever hear of a little thing called a knout?"

"Yes, often," I said.

"So have I, me boy; and I don't want to taste it for not doing me jewty. But that's rale Kinahan, isn't it?" he continued. "Let me smell it once more."

I handed him the flask, and, unscrewing the top, he placed it to his nose.

"And you call yourself an Irishman!" I exclaimed. "You can't smell it that way, man. Put it to the other end of your nose, where the scenting organ is strongest."

"Put it to the other end?" he said, inquiringly.

"Yes; and let the whiskey trickle down your throat. You get the full bouquet then."

He shut one eye, and winked at me with the other, as he slowly placed the flask to his mouth, and began to lift his little finger in the air.

I waited till it was pointing to the zenith, and then, to the astonishment of the horse, which watched me with all its eyes, I softly dodged round the wall, saw Rublu Pacha making off in the distance towards some Turkish troops, and, using up all my speed, I overtook him, and was safe away before Pat had finished the flask.

Ah, sir, what an evil thing is drink, and how delicious it is to drink huge draughts of wisdom from an Eastern people like these Turks, who are forbidden to indulge in any such panderings to a low taste. But for that flask of whiskey, that Russo-Hibernian would have done his duty, and captured your Correspondent. Oh, that men will put an enemy into their mouths to steal away their brains!

By the way, I think that would be better if burglar were placed in the stead of enemy—enemies don't steal, thieves and burglars do. Under the circumstances, I shall charge you for that flask. It cost me five guineas, on account of the mountings; but I am sure you will consider my liberty cheap at that sum.

Rublu was horribly out of breath when I overtook him; and we ran on together towards a cluster of mounted men—friends, evidently, but they did not "act as sich;" for they came at us with a howl, evidently seeing something about us to plunder, loot being the patriotic feeling which pervades these Tcherkesses and Bashi-Bazouks.

Fortunately, Rublu recovered his breath and his temper at the same moment, and in just the nick of time gave the scoundrelly thieves such a volley in good, sound, honest Turkish, that they hung back, and some regulars coming up, the Bashi-Bazouks allowed themselves to be convinced.

Your readers may like to hear what a Bashi-Bazouk is like. I'll endeavour to describe one.

Let the reader, then, try to recal that particularly unpleasant, gipsy-looking scoundrel who came round to the back door, ostensibly to sell clothes—props and pegs, and nearly frightened cook and Mary Ann into fits. Let the reader, then, take this especial gipsy ruffian, with the black hair, hook nose, dark eyes,

and scowling complexion, dress him in Eastern costume, with plenty of sheepskin amongst it, hang a couple of pipes from his belt, mount him on a dilapidated screw of a horse, and furnish him with a whole arsenal of rusty weapons, beginning with a long flint and steel gun, and half a dozen dangerous pistols—dangerous to the firer and the firee—a couple of curved swords, a few knives, and more or less plunder of a portable kind; and you have the Bashi-Bazouk.

He is an angel of the fallen nature; and, take him all in all, there is nothing that he will not do. He will fight if his side is ten to one; he will run away if it is not. He will ruddle himself to the very eyes in blood, like a butcher, and enjoy it; cut throats, hack women to pieces, burn old men, skewer young ones; and give him babies, and he is perfectly happy. He loves them and their sweet, innocent ways, sporting amongst them with his spear, picking them up, and throwing them to his companions, who pick them up in turn, even as you, gentle reader, pick up sardines on a fork. For your Bashi-Bazouk is a real humourist with babies; and there is only one thing I have not known him do, and that is, eat them. He delights in roasting them, though—a dry, sinister smile curling up the corners of his lips as he watches them get brown in the fierce fire, along with their mothers; such being the Bashi-Bazouk's gentle ways.

"How is it you have such playful creatures in your army?" I said to Rublu.

"The sons of Sheitan!" he ejaculated, with a pious look towards heaven. "They stop the cannon balls of the Muscovite, and so save the lives of our Redifs and Nizams—true believers and followers of the Prophet. They act as padding, dear boy, to stop the fast blows, and they are splendid fellows for laying waste a country where the enemy are coming. They have only one failing."

"And what may that be?" I asked.

"A mere trifle," he replied, with a smile over-spreading his broad visage—"they cannot always distinguish between friends and foes."

"Of course they are true believers?" I said.

"To be sure they are, dear boy."

"And pass away at last to the happy hunting grounds, pervaded by the prophets, houris, elephants, and camels?"

"Certainly, dear boy, if that moral obliquity of vision—that *stribismus*—does not lead them into making a mistake in the place where the roads fork. However, that is not likely, dear boy, for they work very hard to sanctify themselves, and prepare themselves for the future by polishing off every dog of a giaour they meet."

The Turkish army was now coming up fast, and we proceeded to occupy the hills about Matchin, from whence, by means of my very powerful glass, I could see Galatz lying beyond Braila, where the Muscovites were busy as bees.

"They are coming over in force directly, pacha," I said, returning my binocular to its case.

"They've been coming for the last month," he said, contemptuously.

"But they are finishing a bridge of rafts," I said, "down below there at Braila; and I can see them

embarking at Galatz, horse and foot, guns and stores."

"Let them come," he said, pointing to the marsh beneath us, all overrun with water. "They'll drown like so many rats, unless we drag them out for prisoners."

"You saw those boats amongst the reeds there," I said, pointing down at a broad, reed-fringed, lake-like expanse.

"No," he said, with the true Eastern fatalism which he had picked up—"I saw no boats. Let them come."

"But they have guns on board, and have been ferried across."

"Bosh!" he replied, seating himself cross-legged on a carpet of the richest Turkey produce, and placing the great amber mouthpiece of his hookah in his mouth, as it was handed to him by a black slave.

Just then an incident occurred, which I mention, as it afforded me an opportunity for saving the life of a brave Englishman, who has been weak enough to embrace the turban and cheesecutter.

Rublu had given but a few puffs from his pipe, seated comfortably there on the slope of the hill, with his soldiers behind, and a guard of Nizams around him, one and all armed with the Martini-Henry rifle, when I took out my glass again, swept the reed bed, and saw that the Russians had sent a polk of Cossacks off along the firm ground to their left, while they were evidently busy with their guns on the low barges or rafts upon which they had been ferried across.

I was too old a weazel to be caught asleep; and as the breeze swept the reeds a little on one side, I saw that a rammer was in motion, and that a field piece was being loaded.

That was enough for me; and it put me on my guard.

I closed my glass, returned it to its case, and watched the spot in the reeds, about a mile away, where the Russian gunners were at work.

As I expected, at the end of a minute there was a puff of white smoke; and I distinctly saw a ball come skipping up the hill directed straight for us.

There was not a moment to spare. In less time than it takes to write it, so straightly was the ball aimed that it would have struck the pacha right in the chest, and he would have smoked no more.

But I was there, and quick as lightning I acted.

You know, sir, how great a cricketer I am, and how often I have sent the ball to leg for five or six before admiring thousands, whose plaudits seemed to ring in my ears as I performed the feat I am about to explain. You have seen me send a ball to long field off, play one gently to mid-wicket, cut a ball horizontally, and deliver sloggers till the field has been weary of running after the ball; while the score mounted up from two figures to three, and I have ended at Lord's by carrying out my bat, amid the cheers of the men and the many, and the approving smiles of the ladies who graced the match.

The whole scene, sir, seemed to come back to me on that green hill slope at Matchin. As I said, the ball came running towards the pacha like one of Tarrant's swingers—swing-e-ers, mind—and I was

equal to the occasion, which please picture in your mind's eye as I describe it.

There sat the cross-legged pacha, taking the place of the wicket; the guards off to right, left, and in front were the fielders; and the slaves behind, the wicket keeper and the short and long stop; while beyond was the army, occupying the place of the spectators.

On came the ball like lightning, and in a second the pacha's stumps would have been flying, not a bail would he have had to bless himself withal—in fact, it would have been all over—when I seized a rifle from the nearest Nizam.

It was a beggarly substitute, sir, for a Dark or Clapham bat, with spring whalebone handle; but it was all I had, as, clasping the barrel in both hands together, I threw myself into the well-practised position—my bat perfectly upright, but my left elbow towards the bowler.

On came the nine-pounder ball, skipping easily along the grass, but at a wonderful speed, straight for the wicket.

"It's a shooter," I said, mentally, as I raised my bat—I mean rifle stock. "How shall I play it? Cut—block—slog. Ha!—gently, to mid-wicket. That Nizam will never catch it if I keep my elbow well up, and it is my only chance of saving my wickets."

These were thoughts of electric speed, as I took in the situation, and saw my best course; for it was a swift, awkward, twisting ball, that I dare not strike at full.

On it came, then; and, seeing my opening, I played it off gently to mid-wicket, when, to my horror, I saw that, instead of going down, it rose; for, to my shame, I had given mid-wicket an easy catch.

He was a tall, swarthy Nizam, well up in the game; for as soon as he saw that I was about to play the ball, he dropped his rifle, and fell into an easy position, with his hands upon his knees, ready for the catch.

It was all instantaneous. The nine-pounder ball was stopped, flew from my bat, and the Nizam caught it.

"Well played! well played!" arose in a shout.

"Yah, butterfingers!" roared the pacha, from behind me, from the force of old associations; for he was a Harrow boy. "You ought to have caught that. By Jove—Allah, I mean—his head's off!"

"And his hands too, my pacha!" I said, returning the rifle to the owner, with a bow. "But your life is saved."

It was quite time, for the Nizam lay handless and headless on the sward, while the ball was far away, rolling down the hill towards Matchin.

"I owe you one for that, Solomon," said the pacha, rising and embracing me. "You shall do precisely as you please in camp after this. Behold my signet."

He placed a large signet ring upon my finger as he spoke, the flat signet part having two or three characters from the Koran.

"Now let's be off," he said; "I don't care about running into unnecessary danger. As for this place, let's see, what's it called?"

"Matchin, oh, gracious commander!" said half a dozen voices.

"To be sure," he said, as I whispered in his ear; "so it shall be." Then aloud, "In future, my friends and followers, there shall be a title prefixed to the name, and it shall be known in all the Sultan's dominions as Cricket Matchin."

"Good! good! good!" cried all who heard him—a fat captain rolling on the ground in the excess of his mirth.

"That fat humbug expects promotion, or he would not laugh so at your joke," I said, quietly.

"Right," said Rublu—"he is a humbug. Here, Ibrahim, captain of the Brown Brigade, take a dozen men and bury that black Nizam."

The captain looked chapfallen, and bowed, while we were moving off to a place of safety; when there came three more shots skipping towards us, and from our flank a polk of Cossacks dashing at full gallop to sweep us away, or perform some such unpleasant duty.

"Not this time," I said, seizing a sabre as a Cossack came at me full tilt, lance levelled, eyes flashing, and his horse covered with foam.

Animile Statistix.

KATS are affectionate; they luv young chickens, sweet kream, and the best place in front ov the fireplace.

Dogs are faithful; they will stick to a bone after everybody haz deserted it.

Parrots are easilly edukated; but they will learn to swear well in haff the time they will learn ennything else.

The birds eat fis and worms for plain vittles, but their dessert konsists of the best cherrys and gooseberrys in the garden.

The owl is only a picture uv wisdum by dalite, when he kan't see ennything. When it cums nite his wisdum wholly konsists in ketching a field-mouse, if he can.

The donkey is an emblem of pachunce; but if ye studly them klosser yu will find that lazyness is what's the matter ov them.

The eagle is the monark of the skies; but the little kingbird will chase him to his hiding-place.

The ox knoweth his master's krib, and that is all he du kno or care about his master.

Munkeys are imitatiff; but if they can't immitate some devily they aint happy.

The goose iz like all other phools—alwass seems anxious to prove it.

If mules are ever meek it iz simply becauze they are ashamed ov themselves; but mules are hibred—aint accountable for ennything.

The bees are a bizzy people; rather than be idle they will rob each other ov their hunny.

The kockroach iz a loafer, and don't seem to live so much on what they eat as what they kan get into.

Ducks are only cunning about one thing: they lay their eggs in sitch sly places that sumtimes they can't find them again themselves.

The kro iz the most natral ov all thiefs; they will steal and hide what is ov no use to them nor loss to ennybody else.

Ants are the bizzyest ov all the little or big bugs, but a large share ov their time iz spent in repairing

their houses, which are bilt whare folks kant help but step on them.

Flies toil not, neither do they spin, yet they have the first taste ov all the best gravys in the land.

The cuckoo iz the gratest ekonomist amung the birds; she lays her eggs in other birds' nests, and lets them hatch them out at their leisure.

Rats have fewer friends and more enemys than ennything of the four-legged purswashun on the face of the earth, and yet rats are as plenty now az in the palmyest days ov the Roman Empire.

Ov all things lazy the sloth wears the belt, and yet his laziness iz all thare is interesting about him.

Hens kno when it is a-going to rain, and shelter themselves, but they will try to hatch out a glass egg az honest az they will one ov their own.

The horse alwuss gits up from the ground on his fore legs first, the kow on her hind ones, and the dog turns around 3 times before he lies down.

The Compact.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER II.

DELAYS beset Martin at every turn. The last stage had been gone a good half-hour before he was ready to turn homeward. This, however, was a small matter to a light-footed, tireless fellow like Huss, who knew every inch of the way he was to travel. He buttoned his coat about him, and, whistling gaily, set out on foot for Hawk's Tavern.

It was a wonderful night—clear, cold, with a full moon riding high in the white, frosty heavens. The ground was knee-deep in snow, frozen to a solid crust, over which one might walk as upon a polished floor.

There was not a breath of wind—not a sound but his own feet crunching over the white, brittle snow.

He was plodding along, not more than two miles distant from Hawk's Tavern, when a sudden sound arrested his steps. It was a sharp cracking in the snow, somewhere near at hand. Huss stopped and looked around.

On either side of the road was a rail-fence, skirted by brushwood, which presented an almost impenetrable screen betwixt him and the open fields beyond. He advanced, right and left, to this barrier, and looked over, but saw nothing save the long, motionless shadows overlying the interminable stretch of snow.

"It was fancy," said Martin Huss, and hurried on again.

For twenty yards, perhaps. Then, swiftly, suddenly as a thunderbolt strikes, a dark, bulking shape leaped from the roadside thicket near him, and buried deep in his side something sharp. Then came blows—quick, heavy, murderous blows, rained from a stake on his head, arms, body.

Unexpected as was the attack, sudden and terrible as it was, Martin Huss had still one instant to remember the pocket-pistol of the pedlar in the pocket of his coat. Blinded with his own blood, he vainly sought to grapple with his sudden, silent, deadly adversary.

"Coward!" he cried, "who are you?"

There was no answer; and, snatching Lanard's

pistol from his breast, he fired, staggered, flung up his arms, and fell back upon the snow.

Half an hour after, a sled, driven by some woodcutters from Hawk's Tavern, came slipping along the shining, moonlit road. They found, stretched across the way, the senseless bodies of two men. The first was Cathcart, the stage-driver; the other, Martin Huss, bathed in blood, with a knife halfburied in his side, and an old silver-mounted pocket-pistol lying near him on the snow. The sled was turned about, and the two insensible bodies carried off straightway to Hawk's Tavern.

Cathcart was laid upon a bed in an upper chamber of the house. There, consciousness returned, and he opened his eyes and looked around. With one hand pressed to his breast, where the pistol-ball lay buried beyond all hope of extraction, he glared sullenly up at the surgeon standing beside the bed.

"Is he dead?" he asked.

"He is very near it."

"It's all up with me, too, I s'pose?"

"I am afraid it is."

Suddenly a woman's shriek rolled into the room.

"Is she with him?" hissed Cathcart, savagely.

"His betrothed wife? Yes," said the doctor.

Cathcart ground his teeth.

"That's just my cussed luck! I thought I had him sure!"

And he fell back on his pillow, with a face distorted by pain and vengeful hate.

Through the remaining hours of the night, he lay with set teeth, staring up at the wall.

"He is dying," said the doctor. "He cannot last half an hour longer."

Hawk, a good Puritan, went up to the bed, greatly shocked.

"Poor critter!" he began. "Hain't you no confession to make now—nothing to say? No man can die easy with a bad secret on his conscience. I'll go for a parson, if you say the word. What set ye murdering Martin Huss, in cold blood, like that—a good fellow like Martin, who never wronged anybody?"

Cathcart stared up at him darkly.

"I want none of your persons here. I know a secret, but I shall die with it untold; you bet that! As for Huss, the trouble 'twixt us was just—Riquetta. I shan't say any more. I've made up my mind to die game."

Having shut his lips on this resolution, he turned his stubborn face to the wall. The physician went to the adjoining room of Huss, for the two were lying with only a narrow passage between them. Hawk followed, leaving the door of Cathcart's chamber half open. Huss was still unconscious. At the foot of his bed crouched Riquetta, in a white, stricken heap, and two or three of the servants were watching about him. Hawk and the doctor had barely entered the room, when a singular sound was heard in Cathcart's chamber, across the passage—a gasping, wrestling, struggling, loud, violent sound, mingled with a cry of "Off! off!" in Cathcart's voice.

Simultaneously the doctor, Hawk, and the servants rushed together across the passage. They were just in time to see Cathcart, who had been sit-

ting erect, fall back on his pillow, the sweat streaming from his livid face, his eyes distended, his hands knotted in the bedclothes. The clothes themselves were all awry, and everything about the bed gave evidence of a struggle.

"For God's sake, what's the matter?" cried Hawk, appalled. "Who's been here?"

The throat of the dying wretch was full of blood. He strove to speak, but could not.

"I could swear some one has been here with him," said Hawk, in amaze. "Look at the counterpane, all twisted and trampled about the floor, and here are marks on the bed and the pillows."

Presently Cathcart seemed to fall into a stupor. They lingered about him a while, then went away again, and left the door ajar, as before. Hardly were they well out of the room when the sounds of struggle broke out anew, and, louder than ever, Cathcart's voice, wild and terrible, filled the whole house.

"Don't! For God's sake, off! off! off! Curse the compact! I'll not tell! I'll not tell!"

In vain the astonished household entreated him to explain. In their presence he relapsed into stupor again, struggling in great agony for breath. Hawk and the ostler agreed to watch with him that night.

Hour after hour passed without incident, till an old clock in the hall of the tavern tolled out the hour of midnight. Then, of a sudden, a wild shriek broke from the dying wretch. He struggled fiercely.

"Off!" he gasped; and then, in a loud voice, "I'm beat! I'll tell! It was I that killed Lanard the pedlar. I struck the blow—under the cellar stairs—in the shanty—"

With these words on his lips, his arms dropped beside him. He fell back on his pillow, stone dead.

Martin Huss, though he wavered long betwixt life and death, did not die. He lived to marry Riquetta, and to unearth the bones of Lanard from their unhallowed grave under the stairs of the shanty, and give them Christian burial.

My First Mahseer.

NEXT morning I was up early, and found my hill-soldier attendant had provided a few bright little fish by way of bait. I set off up stream for two or three miles, to a magnificent pool I knew of, and as I went discoursed to my hill-man about the mighty fish I had captured in auld Scotland with that taper rod and delicate line. He looked, listened, shrugged his shoulders, and evidently thought that I had a strong imagination.

On reaching my favourite pool, I put on a single gut trace, as the water was very clear, and a nice bright little fish some four or five inches long, and cast into the tail of a boiling rapid where I was certain fish ought to be. I spun away for a quarter of an hour; and my attendant, after looking grimly on at my folly, tucked himself up to sleep behind a big boulder.

I thought matters looked badly, and to comfort myself took out a cheroot, letting my bait meanwhile spin away in a deep current. Before I had had two puffs, however, I saw my line suddenly move off across the stream, and in another second

a gentle twitch put me fast in something. As I increased the pressure, I found the weight get heavier; and on giving my customer a taste of the butt, I was astounded by his making a dash across that took out some seventy or eighty yards at one fell swoop.

Off we went, down into the huge pool, racing over boulders, and splashing through sand and water. I could not wade, as the water was out of my depth. The native was now wide-awake, and dancing on the bank above me with excitement. For a quarter of an hour the fish dashed up and down and across, as pleased him best; for I found I had got hold of something large, that I could not as yet control in the least.

The native suggested it might be a muggur (an alligator) from the Ganges.

The brute now took down stream, and I had to put on all the pressure I dared, as there was a very ugly rapid not half a mile below me. After about twenty minutes, I got him a little nearer to me, and got a glimpse of his tail, and a broad one it was. The native up aloft sang out that he was as big as a man.

In a few minutes more, I got him pretty close to my side of the water; and as I was coming to a shallower place, near the tail of the pool, about a third of a mile from where I had hooked him, I began to see him every now and then. At last he dashed close in to me, and sulked in a deep hole, nor could I move him with all the strain I dared put on him. However, I got my native to drop a big stone close to him, which sent him off once more rattling up stream.

Now I found I could command him, and soon brought him sailing in towards the edge of a stony little bay. As my landing net was of no use for such a monster, I told my man to go down and take hold when I brought the fish close to the bank, and let him drop down to him.

Fancy my disgust, as the monster came floating past, at seeing my native friend whip out his kookerie and slash at his shoulder. The cut, however, only scratched his thick scales, and made him dart off again. Next trial was more successful; and my man shoved his arm into the huge gills and dragged him out. Five and thirty minutes I had fought him; and he was a beauty—the first mahseer I had ever caught.

At a young ladies' seminary recently, during an examination in history, one of the most promising pupils was interrogated:—"Mary, did Martin Luther die a natural death?" "No," was the reply; "he was excommunicated by a bull."

THE late Sir Charles Looock, physician, who was always bringing forth something remarkable, met the Duke of Wellington in the park, and in place of his usual cheerful greeting, the great soldier scowled darkly at the man of pills, and said, "Confound it, Looock; I've got a racking headache all through those nasty pulmonic wafers of yours." "Well," retorted the other, "that's too bad; here am I suffering agonies from those confounded boots of yours—for I suppose I have as much right to charge you with the shortcomings of 'Wellingtons' as you have to charge me with those of 'Looock's Pulmonic Wafers.'"

A Cinnamon Savage.

IN the western pit, a great, savage old cinnamon bear was in company with five small black bears, all about the same age, two-thirds grown, twenty months old. Uncle J. Robinson presented the big bear to the Garden, and he says it is a cinnamon bear, one of the most ferocious species, next to the grizzly. When with the show he was troublesome, and it was always found necessary to keep him chained to his cage.

Be it said to big Cinnamon's credit, that he has lived in the Garden for a year with the five little bears, on terms of intimacy and good fellowship. But the little ones were grown almost into full-sized bears, rivals of old Cinnamon, as we shall call him. It is supposed that visitors threw food into the pit, and that the little ones, being nimbler than old Cinnamon, got more than he did, and this excited his jealousy.

From whatever cause, the other afternoon, old Cinnamon attacked the most active of the little bears, and then commenced a fight such as human eyes seldom look upon. Two of the four other bears climbed the snag of the tree set up in the pit, a third clambered up the iron gate, and the fourth paced round the pit in a tremor of terror. The noise of the conflict drew a crowd to the scene, many of whom were ladies. Cinnamon's style of fighting was to seize his adversary by the throat, just at the back of the ear, and, quartering under the jaw, close upon him like a steel trap, and hold him down, shaking him occasionally with short shakes, but always bearing down and holding fast.

The little one, which was only half or two-thirds the weight of his assailant, shrieked. At first his cries were appalling, like the words, "Take care! take care!" but they soon faded into a succession of hoarse, gurgling sounds.

The keeper, Mr. J. Nordheim, tried the effect of punching with a pole to make Bruin quit his hold, but it was of no use. He next threw a lot of fresh fish right under his nose, but the bait did not take; then the water was thrown on him—a stream from a hose. This made him let go. The little lacerated blacky got up, and made circles round the cage, shrieking and crying at a terrible rate; while the bear on the gate-bars, and the two perched in the tree, shook like blown leaves, as if fearing their turn would come next.

The little one, though, that had stood on the floor a looker-on all the while, crouched in a corner, half in defiance and half in fear. Old Cinnamon ate his fish, and then returned to the little bear. The little fellow jumped into the pool, and old Cinnamon pounced on him to drown him, as the spectators feared. Again the hose was applied. Old Cinnamon did not seem to mind it. He tugged little blacky out of the pool, and began again.

At this moment Nordheim ran into the den, armed with a long-handled, heavy spade.

"Oh, don't go in!" shouted men and shrieked women; but he had passed the portals.

Thud, thud, thud!—three thuds of the shovel on Bruin's head released little blacky, but turned Cin-

namon on brave Nordheim, who had nothing but a spade.

Thud, thud!—down went Cinnamon, and up he got again, staggered close to the little blacky, and opened the fight again.

Thud, thud, thud!—thick and heavy fell the blows on old Cinnamon's skull. The old beast loosened his hold, and ran into the dungeon next to the pit.

"Unlock that gate," shouted Nordheim to Mr. Tennen, "and I will shut him up for good now."

Once the door was securely shut, it was amusing to see the four frightened but unhurt bears leave their posts, and strut up to that door, then stride around the cage, as much as to say, "Won't somebody please knock a chip off my shoulder?" Around and around they marched, returning to the door, and smelling it, feeling it cautiously, and rearing up against it, as if to make sure that all was safe; then strutted off, Falstaff-like, when the danger was gone.

No Joke.

HE was a large man, with a freckled face, sharp nose, little twinkling grey eyes, and a pile of cheek. He wore a red moustache, red hair, a seedy "beaver," and a faded overcoat.

Procuring a barrel, he turned it open end downwards at the corner of the market-place of Slowford, and then he carefully trimmed and lit a naphtha lamp, remarking the while to a bystander that it was precious cold, and opened a mysterious-looking little trunk that lay on a three-legged frame before him.

Next he put his hand over his heart, and proceeded to tell how his cousin, Sir Ashtley Cooper, while sojourning in the wilds of Honolulu, had discovered in a simple pasture weed a remedy which was a specific for each and every ill that human flesh was heir to. Consumption, that fell destroyer, as the neighbouring gravestones could attest to, bore thousands upon thousands yearly to early graves. Here he dashed away a tear, held up a bottle and went on:—

"Gentlemen" (emphasizing the *men*), "me heart is with you to-night. I, gentlemen, I stand here boldly, like Ajax defying the lightning—caring naught for the withering shafts of scorn aimed at me by your doctors, for I, gentlemen, I alone, possess the Open Sessam to the door of health. I, gentlemen, boldly proclaim that by the use of my sovereign remedy consumption can be cured!"

He also stated that bald heads, stomach-ache, chilblains, warts, and bilious fever, everything, even down to the most ferocious corn, which if neglected would mortify not many years hence in the summer time, all, each, and every one of these were permanently cured by his sovereign remedy, without the use of mercury, or the deleterious effect of expense on the pocket-book. His uncle, Jaycox, while travelling in India, was cured of a snake bite with it; and his wholesale agents in Europe were selling tons and tons of it. Now here was the remedy, which he sold at one shilling per bottle large size, and sixpence per bottle small size; but it was much cheaper to purchase the large size. The ladies preferred to use the large size in the household, because

in the end it went three times as far as the small size.

But while this harangue was going on, some one, with the view of a little innocent sport, had slipped a packet of gunpowder under the dry-goods box upon which Cooper's cousin was standing, and having lit a fuse connected with the keg, the crowd softly and quickly got out of range, and stood expectantly grinning, with their hands in their pockets.

"This sovereign remedy," he proceeded to say, "this purely vegetable remedy, you will perceive, gentlemen, is in two sizes. Now the large size contains—"

But just then he discovered that he was losing his audience, and as he raised his voice to call them back he imagined that he heard something fizz right under the box. This struck him at the time as being a little singular; so hastily laying aside a large package of Sir Ashtley's discovery, he bent down over the box, fully determined to investigate the matter at all hazards. And even as he bent downwards and listened (it does seem strange that men will play such jokes nowadays)—even as he bent down, entirely unconscious of the meaning of that peculiar noise, there came a vivid flash, followed by a boom, and he grandly sailed upward.

"Gone to meet his cousin," said the crowd, as they turned away.

Fortunately he was not hurt; but, seeing that the Slowfordians had no taste for the sovereign remedy, he went away as soon as he came down.

A Land of Beauties.

"OVER the Hills and Far Away" is the title of a very entertaining book of travel, written by Mr. T. W. Hinchliff, who in his journey through South America thus describes Petropolis, a German colony founded by the present emperor:—

"It is built among lovely hills, and surrounded by some of the richest vegetation of this prolific region. Fuchsias of fifty or sixty feet in height, blooming from top to bottom; the scarlet passion flower of our hot-houses sometimes twining round the green stems of the bamboos, while the common passion flower roams at will over everything it comes in contact with; poinsettias, not in small plants as seen on a London dinner table, but grown into very large bushes, on which are occasionally found crimson stars two feet in diameter; the Cobæa scandens hanging its purple bells from bush to bush—such are some of the more showy attractions that abound in the vicinity; while to the fern collector no other place appears comparable to this region."

At various times, Mr. Hinchliff and his companions collected about 250 distinct species within a day's walk or ride from Petropolis; and Mr. Frederick Longman forwarded to Dr. Hooker a collection which was found to contain a few species new to science.

As to animate life, it is surprising how little there appears to be in this region, so richly clothed with beautiful vegetation. Sometimes the moths startle one as they pass with a jerky flight, like a woodcock just flushed. The Imperador is the largest Mr. Hinchliff has seen, and some specimens of this

are from ten to twelve inches across their spotted pale brown wings.

No wonder that at first he mistook one for a bird. But of birds there are surprisingly few, perhaps owing in some measure to the rapacity of the feather collectors.

The following passage, with its context, is suggestive:—

"Mdile. Natté, in the Rua do Ouvidor, has a splendid collection of ornaments made from the feathers of Brazilian birds. Let no man think he knows anything about feather flowers till he has been to Rio. The gay imitations which may be picked up in any quantity at Madeira or St. Vincent are rough, vulgar things, made of painted feathers: those in Brazil are made of genuine feathers, in all their naturally splendid colours. The wreaths formed of the breasts of humming-birds, the pure white fans, edged with the flamingo feathers of scarlet tipped with black, are beautiful beyond description; and Mr. Rawson took home some exquisite specimens. With regard to the birds themselves, it is surprising to find how few of them, except the many-coloured humming-birds, are visible in the ordinary rides and walks. Now and then a grand kingfisher may be seen on a riverside rock; and here and there a brilliant toucan darts across the road, in all the splendour of crimson, blue, and yellow; but as a rule they remain in the depths of the forest, where they are very difficult to see amongst the multitudinous branches and leaves. Three of us once tried a day's shooting, at a place about twenty miles from Petropolis; but we only shot a few small birds, most of which fell into impenetrable jungle, and the largest of those picked up was a quaint little kingfisher, scarce three inches in length. The butterflies and moths everywhere were simply magnificent; but the audible and visible birds were far more scarce than I should have expected."

From Petropolis a good road has now been made to the most important of the mine districts, and it runs for a considerable distance past coffee plantations. Agassiz convinced himself that this rich country had been swept by glacial action, and that the most successful coffee plantations were found exactly where the movements of ice had most enriched the soil, by the transportation and mixture of its component elements.

Mr. Hinchliff laments over what he terms the awful destruction of vegetable life involved in the production of a few pounds of coffee. The virgin forest is burned, and blackened stumps alone remain. A French botanist told him it would take a fortnight to botanize one of the huge trees, which occasionally fall without the aid of fire. Each of them is not only a tree, but a garden, for the whole stem is clothed with other plants and flowers, and so is each wide-spreading bough.

FIRE-IRONY.—A married man who frequently has rows with his wife, in which fire-irons play a prominent part, thinks that his poker must be magnetised, because it so often "seeks his poll," though he candidly confesses that its so doing has no "attraction" for him.

The Egotist's Note-book.

THE following, from *Coming Events*, will probably interest many of our readers at the present juncture:—"It would seem that we are about to have a revival of 'muscular Christianity,' under the auspices of the very last persons whom we should have suspected of favouring the creed of Charles Kingsley and Tom Hughes—viz., the extreme Ritualists. The Bishop of Winchester the other day visited the Mission College, Blackfriars-road, founded by the Warden of the Council of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, for the training of missionary priests who cannot afford a university education. After the ceremony of visitation there was a luncheon, at which many eminent Ritualistic clergymen were present, among them the Rev. N. Dawes, who, in a speech at the close of the luncheon, expressed an ardent wish 'that every one of the students of the college would keep in his dormitory three things—(1) a crucifix, (2) a well-thumbed Bible, and (3) a pair of boxing-gloves.' The reverend gentleman did not state his reason for including the emblems of pugilism among the paraphernalia of a student's dormitory, nor did he enlighten his hearers as to the precise mode in which a student in his solitary sleeping cell was to derive benefit from the use of the 'gloves,' unless, indeed, he meant to advocate the old Greek *skiomachia*, or shadow fighting. It is clear, however, that Mr. Dawes wishes the young students of the Mission College to cultivate a militant muscularity. Perhaps he had just read a letter in the *Standard* advocating the use of physical force to prevent the entrance of the Anglican confessor into Protestant English households. Or, possibly, recent events at Hatcham may have demonstrated to him the importance of pugilistic science to a clergyman who is liable to be mobbed by 'Low Church roughs.' However this may be, it is somewhat strange to find the modern Ritualist going back to the old creed of 'the Presbyterian true blue' of Hudibras's day, and apparently resolved, if need be—

'To prove his doctrine orthodox
By apostolic blows and knocks.'

Messrs. Maskelyne and Cook would do well to have fresh type for the bills carried about by their sandwich men. At present, when you read with hasty glance, the boards seem to bear the words, "Mr. Maskelyne's Toe," instead of "Zoe."

The *Army and Navy Gazette* says that the volunteers are showing a disposition to accede to the wishes of the War Office as regards uniform, and a number of applications have been made lately for permission to discontinue the grey and the green tunics in favour of others of the national colour. Why not get them boiled (by a dyer)? They would then assume the proper lobster colour.

"DEAR HUSBAND—Do, pray, return to me and your dear children, who are asking for you so often that I am nearly distracted. Do come; you shall never regret it.—*From your Wife.*" I'm afraid the gentleman to whom this advertisement is addressed in the

columns of a daily paper must have had rather a hard time of it before he ran away. She has evidently made up her mind never to come to blows any more. Will the gentleman listen to the voice of the charmer?

Here is a lady at work trying to outdo Dando, the oyster-eater, who, no matter how he was punished, always recommenced his old game, that of swindling the keepers of oyster shops. The fair one in question goes to a railway refreshment-room, and has a glorious meal, finding out directly afterwards that she has lost her purse. I'm afraid if I kept a refreshment stall, and expected a visit from that fair dame, I should prepare her some sandwiches, even as Aunt Milly prepared those of Percival Keene, when they were devoured by his schoolmaster. Those sandwiches contained calomel.

She was a very modest girl, and when the observatory astronomer said "Take a glance through the telescope, miss, and you will see Venus in all her glory," she frigidly drew back, and replied, "No, thank you, sir; I have no desire to look at any member of my sex who dresses as she is represented to."

An old writer says: "I have seen women so delicate that they were afraid to ride, for fear of the horse running away; afraid to sail, for fear the boat might be upset; afraid to walk, for fear they might fall; but I have never seen one afraid to be married, which is far more riskful than all the others put together."

A physician in a country town who had been annoyed by numerous questions concerning the condition of a patient, was stopped, while on his busy rounds, by a man with the old question, "How's M.?" "Ill," replied the physician. "Does he keep his bed?" "Of course he does. You don't suppose he's fool enough to sell his bed because he's ill, do you?"

By way of showing the rate of progress in a Christian country, let it be known that there are one hundred bull-rings in Spain, and only twelve savings banks. Several of the towns which have recently built rings have no schools.

The "Tatler" of the *Pictorial World* says: "By the way, I believe there is a good deal of work done by the late Walter Thornbury which might very well be published. It is curious, but very few writers who have taken note of him have drawn any particular attention to his power as a verse writer. Of course the 'Riding to the Tournament' is well known enough; but I saw a poem of his in an old number of *ONCE A WEEK*, the subject being 'Dean Swift and the Mohocks,' which was most quaintly and beautifully written." I have great pleasure in endorsing these words, and saying that the old volumes contain several little-known but very clever pieces from his pen.

A City man, of a very practical turn of mind, took

his daughter to Paris with him, and whilst there they went one night to see "Paul and Virginia." The young lady, who was deeply interested in the pathetic history of the hero and heroine, could not refrain from tears. Her father, unable to appreciate such extreme sensitiveness, pulled her by the sleeve, and said—

"Don't cry like that. They've nothing to complain about; they're making a nice bit of money out of it."

A cultivated Australian thinks that we don't have Sundays enough, and that the week should consist of five days only. We ought also to discard the pagan names by which the days of the week are distinguished, and to substitute for them the names Oneday, Twoday, Threeday, and Fourday, whilst the fifth day, or Sunday, should be called Goodday. I suppose that most people would say good-day to that proposal.

Two or three Irish members and an Irish editor are quarrelling about the extent of their respective sufferings whilst they were in gaol. It's a mistake to suppose that Irishmen are always obstinate, as many of the present Irish members would willingly admit that at some time or other they have been open to conviction. Judging from the composition of the Home Rule party, it would seem that the surest road to St. Stephen's is through the doors of a prison.

That was a remarkable instance of the value of circumstantial evidence which was mentioned at Bow-street the other day. A house had been broken into in Tavistock-street, Covent Garden, and the thieves had left behind a piece of newspaper, with particles of fish adhering to it. Sergeant Boyall, a detective, had seen a well-known thief come out of a fried fish shop in Drury-lane on the night of the robbery, and on taking the fragment of newspaper to this shop, it was found to have been torn out of a copy of the *Church Review*, the remainder of the paper being still at the shop. By this means the thief was apprehended, and has since been committed for trial. It is gratifying to know that even old numbers of the *Church Review* are good for something.

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's *World's Hair Restorer* never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustre beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zylo-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

The Domestic Confessions of Mrs. Chignal.

THE SEVENTH.

I NEED no reminder as to where I left off: it was with the smell of fire in our nostrils, and my appalling shriek to Alfred to save the baby; for—poor, weak me!—I sank fainting on the sofa.

I was brought to by Alfred shouting to me to come down.

"Do you hear?" he said, almost savagely.

And I almost crawled through the choking and blinding smoke to the kitchen, like one in a dream.

"Here's a pretty game!" said Alfred, brutally, as usual.

"Isn't the house on fire?" I managed to pant out.

"House on fire!—no," said he, chuckling with a kind of Satanic joy; "it's only her wig."

"Wig!" I cried.

"Yes," he said, "wig. She's on this time, and no mistake."

My sight by this time was sufficiently clear for me to make out that Alfred had dragged Ellen back into a chair, had done something to her, and that there was a smouldering, charred mass on the kitchen table, which kept on sending up a horrible smoke as it lay there by the kitchen candlestick.

"Oh, good gracious, Alfred!" I said, covering my face with my hands, "is it burnt right off?"

"And no mistake," he said, laughing fiendishly. "Look."

"I daren't," I said. "It would be too much of a shock."

"Bosh!" he cried. "Look, I tell you."

"I daren't, Woppy, darling. Tell me how it was."

"Why, she fell forward, I suppose, while she was sitting at the table, and set it on fire."

"And is her head burnt right off?" I said, in a low, husky whisper.

"Head burnt off, you griffin!" he exclaimed. "Why, it's her confounded great chignon."

Alfred was quite right, and it had saved the poor woman's head; for when he went down it was burning away fast, having fallen right over by the candle.

Woppy took it up with the tongs, and put it on the back of the fire, grinning, and enjoying the whole affair wonderfully; for he did not know what I knew, neither could he understand poor Ellen's look of injured innocence, as he, what he called, "dropped on to her," and gave her such a bullying that the poor woman had a good cry.

He ordered me to get rid of her, as soon as we were upstairs, and told me she was one of the worst kind of drunkards, for she did it in secret; and then he launched out into such a tirade against drunkenness, and abused the poor innocent woman so, that I took her part, and told him the worst form of drunkenness I knew was for men who called themselves gentlemen to come home intoxicated from their clubs, and march in an idiotic way into their wives' bedrooms, hold on by the bed-posts, and smile.

"That must be an awful kind," he said, in a quiet, dry way. "How horrible it must be when a man forgets himself like that!"

"Yes, sir, it is," I said—"horrible; especially when

he won't undress, and persists in playing foolish antics."

"Antics?—antics?" he said.

"Yes, sir; trying to spin himself in the wash-hand basin; and when he is prevailed upon at last to undress, with the assistance of his wife, persisting in treating his night shirt as if it were a pair of trousers, and putting his legs through the sleeves."

"Horrible!" he exclaimed—"most horrible! Such a man deserves to be—"

"Well, sir, what?"

"Forgiven," he said, in his tantalizing fashion. "But do you know any one who could behave in such a mad, outrageous fashion?"

"Alfred!—Alfred!—Alfred!" I exclaimed. "Have you such a thing as a conscience?"

"Well, 'pon my word," he said, "I haven't the most remote idea."

"Does it never prick you, sir?" I said, sadly.

"Where?" he said, sniggering.

"In your heart, sir," I said, for so serious a subject deserved better treatment.

"No, I'll be blowed if it ever did," he said, laughing. "But, I say, get rid of that drunken woman at once."

"She is not drunken, Alfred," I said, solemnly; "the poor woman is afflicted with fits."

"Was that a fit, then?" he said.

"Yes, dear, of course."

"Then that was a fit I had one night, dear, when I came home from the club. Don't you remember how ill I was?"

"Alfred," I said, severely, "this may be sport to you, but to me it is exquisite torture. How can you mock and gibe, and turn to ridicule that horrible taint of the old Adam you have in you!"

"As you like it," he exclaimed, irrelevantly.

"As I don't like it," I said; and I felt that I was making an impression upon him. "Depend upon it, Alfred, that such doings are in nowise conducive to our happiness."

"Can't be," he said, lighting a cigar.

"Fits," I said, "are not to be laughed at."

"Fits of laughter are," he said, grinning.

"If you intend to become a ribald jester, Alfred," I said, "go at once to the editor of *Funny Folks*, and ask him to ornament you with a cap and bells. Such mockery is out of place."

"At-chisew!" went Alfred. "Phew!" he exclaimed, "burnt chignon isn't nice. Give us a glass of brandy and water, old lady."

I gave him the brandy and water, and only at his urgent persuasion did I condescend to touch the hot liquor; and I would not have gone near the glass if I had known that he intended to make ribald jokes about it, and declare that my nose was beginning to look rosy at the end.

But to return to poor Ellen. I was glad to get rid of her; for, poor woman, one never felt safe. The way in which she had fits was something awful; and no matter when she had them, she would have them upside down.

One day it was on the clean things fresh from the laundress; and, of course, she must choose the basket which held my clean dress, tumbling it so that it had to go back to be re-ironed.

Another day there was an awful crash upstairs, and I knew at once it was a fit.

I ran up, and there she was, upside down in the bottom drawer of the big wardrobe, which happened to be opened; and the worst of it was, that whenever Ellen had a fit and came to, which she did in a few minutes, she always looked at you in an ill-used sort of way, just for all the world as if it was your fault.

Only a day or two afterwards she went into the dripping pan, and the very same afternoon crash under the dresser, where I found her, with her head in the preserving pan.

How many times I found her with her head on the mat at the bottom of the stairs, and her legs some distance up—for she was a very tall, thin woman—I am afraid to say, lest I should not be believed.

But about the worst shock I had, after the time when she seemed to try to stand on her head in the pail of water, when she was hearthstoning the front steps, and was helped out, wringing wet, by the butcher's boy who had come for orders, and said something I did not understand about "mops and brooms"—I say the worst shock I had was one day when I went up into the nursery to speak to Keziah, and she was not there, but—how *she* came there I don't know—there was Ellen upside down in the baby's cradle, and I knew that she was smothering my darling underneath her.

It was in vain that I lugged and dragged at her; I could not move her, till the happy idea came to my panting heart, and I gave the cradle a series of rocks, till I rocked strongly enough to rock it right over, and Ellen went over on to the floor, and I fainted away—nearly.

Darling baby was not there, after all; for just as I came to, Keziah walked into the nursery with my precious in her arms, and Ellen got up, rubbing herself, smoothing her hair, and looking as ill-used as possible.

The next morning, I sent for her into my bedroom, where I was busy with the lace-round, cylinder-shaped dirty-linen basket. You know the kind—those which stand in one's bed-room.

I had emptied it, and was putting down the various things in the check book, ready for the laundress when she called; and then, in a few simple, kind words, I told poor Ellen that it was impossible that we could keep her, that she was an excellent servant, and that I would say all I possibly could for her—of course, not keeping back her infirmity—and that, in conclusion, she must leave us at the end of the month.

I don't know how it happened; but almost before I had done speaking, she made a lurch, and went head first, like a diver, into the linen basket, wedging herself in tightly; and there she was, in one of the worst fits she had ever had, and, of course, upside down.

How Keziah and I ever contrived to get that poor woman out, I'm sure I don't know. All I do know is, that she was dragged out—no, I am wrong; I forgot—we dragged the basket off her, and she went downstairs, looking very cross, and just as if I had done it on purpose.

Poor woman! She left us at last, in a cab, with her box on the roof; and as I looked out of the dining-room window, sorry for the poor girl with all my heart, if she did not give a lurch, and went away upside down; and though I ran out to stop the cab, it was out of sight, the only consolation I had being that she would soon come to; for she had fits so often, that I believe they were really good for her health.

Alfred never would be convinced that they were not produced by intoxication. He would persist in saying that she had a secret bottle, and really I think sometimes that it was a judgment upon him that we had Ann.

I found out afterwards that her proper name was not Ann, but Bridget; but she came to us as Ann, and I shall never forget her as long as I live.

At one time I was very particular about the personal appearance of my servants; but I grew by degrees to feel that, if the servant was a good one, her personal appearance was, after all, but a very secondary affair.

Ann was born in London, she assured me. She was a girl about the shape of a domino, with a pea on the top for the head, but not so angular, for the girl was solid and rounded off. Her face was much freckled, and her hair of a rich red. She was a girl who wore pads in her hair; not a chignon, but horrible great fuzzy pads, which were always bursting out of her hair in the most horrible way. Now it would be at the top, now at the bottom or the middle; but there they were, of course intended to be covered over by her hair, but always objecting.

I told her of it one day, and I remember perfectly well her answer—

"Sure, mim, and they won't stay right at all, at all."

When she came, she promised everything, but she did not perform. Ann had a habit of sowing grit all over the kitchen, and in everything. You saw cinders in her hair, in the candle she burnt, in the gravy of the joint; there was grit in the greens, and grit in the omelette, grit got somehow into the potatoes, and on the knives, between the prongs of the forks, and in the salt and sugar.

Alfred grew quite mad over it at last, and used to declare he would make her eat it.

How she managed it, I don't know to this day. It was easy to see how the meat was gritty, because she would upset it beneath the grate. But how could eggs get gritty? How could grit get inside potatoes and in the fowls?

It was a mystery to me; and, after trying to solve it, I have given it up.

A peculiarity of Ann was that she used to snore. She snored whenever she moved, and in the intervals of talking—not slightly, but in a loud, hoarse way, that used to exasperate Alfred beyond bearing, and made him so cross that my life grew quite a burden.

Ann had been with us about a month, when she asked for a holiday; and I was glad to let her go, so as to be clear of grit for one day.

As soon as she had gone, I sat down to think whether I should write and tell Aunt Tatlock to come, for I felt as if our conduct to her had been

disgraceful. The objection was the grit; for if aunt happened to be at dinner with us, and got any of that grit in her false teeth—which are a very expensive set—I knew that the consequences would be awful.

After going into the matter for and against, I decided to put aunt off a little longer; and it was well I did.

Alfred dined with the Whifflers that night, and did not come home till late. But madam Ann was only a few minutes before him; and when he came home I was in a cold perspiration; for Ann had come in looking horribly strange, and as I let him in she was doing nothing but walk round and round the kitchen table, wearing her shawl over her head, and singing the "Cruiskeen Lawn."

I let Alfred in myself, and, at a glance, I saw that he had been to the club; for he was smiling as he generally does when he has been there. He always says that it is the sun of good fellowship left shining on his countenance; but you need not tell me—I know better than that. No sun could shine through the nasty thick tobacco clouds that make his clothes smell so horribly, and get into his hair and beard and moustache. I declare sometimes when he has come home from the club, and laid his head upon the pillow by mine, it has brought on such a fit of sneezing that nothing could be like it.

Well, as I was saying, Alfred came in smiling and humming snatches of songs; and, as he always is when he has been out like this, he must begin to be very affectionate, and anxious for fear I have taken cold in waiting up for him—just, you know, as if I was blind and did not understand it all. Heigho! what geese men will persist in thinking that we are!

"Whash 'at?" said Alfred, suddenly, speaking in a very thick, indistinct way, which he assured me proceeded from the damp. "Whash 'at?"

"I think it's Ann," I said, trembling.

For I was afraid of a scene, and I wanted to get Alfred off to bed.

"Whash shinging for? Now, then, t'chorush."

"She's only humming a tune, dear," I said. "Now come to bed."

"Bed wash made for shlavesh," said he, quoting Shakespeare, as he always does when he has been to the Whifflers'. "Going in kish'n."

Before I could try to stop him, he was off, and all I could do was to follow him as quickly as I could.

Oh, dear! If people only knew what they would have to encounter with husbands and servants when they entered into the most holy state of matrimony, I believe they would stay in a state of single blessedness.

Well, one good thing was that the sight of Ann did dear Alfred good; the sun of good fellowship, as he called it, left off shining on his countenance, the huskiness came out of his voice, and he stood staring at our sweet London-born domestic.

So did I.

The fact was, that the excitement of having a holiday was too much for Ann, who seemed as if she couldn't get over it. I told you that she would keep walking round the kitchen table, wearing her shawl over her head. Well, since my absence to admit dear Alfred, she had got on a stage farther,

for she had actually taken off her boots and stockings, let down her hair, and, placing her arms akimbo, there she was, dancing jigs, and turning her head first this way and then that, crying "Whoop!" and "Hey!" and "Yowk!" as she flourished herself about, her feet going pat-patter-pat on the floor; and as soon as she saw us she began to smile, and beckon us insanely with her hands.

"Why, the girl's mad!" cried Alfred.

"Mad, ye darlint!" cried the abandoned creature; "and is it mad? Come on! Whirrup! Play up!"

I thought I should have fainted with shame and horror, for she flourished and whisked about like a dancing girl, snapped her fingers, and leaped about as if she would never tire. Then, too, the dreadful familiar insolence of the creature, to call her master darlant, and invite him to come and be her partner. Oh, it was atrocious!

"Come on, come on! Dance, ye devils!" she shouted then.

And if I had not been sure of something else, I should have known that Alfred was right, and that the creature was a fit recipient for whatever may be the feminine garment that answers to the strait waistcoat worn by the male sex when placed in confinement.

"Keep off, you Irish hag!" shouted Alfred, who looked quite scared.

For the creature kept making dashes at him as she danced, and her language was perfectly horrible.

For instance, she called Woppie a "darlant" again and again, and a "broth of a boy;" and said "acushla" to him, which evidently meant something horrible. Then she said he was a "gosssoon," and all the time she danced more furiously than ever.

"What shall we do, Alfred?" I whispered.

"Arrah, would ye?" the woman shrieked. "Lave him alone. Let him dance. Now, then, it's Limerick races. Go along, boys. Whoop!"

I sank into a chair, with a mist before my eyes. I would have shrieked, but my throat was dry and parched. I would have run to dear Alfred's assistance; but my legs seemed turned to lead, even as that dreadful woman's seemed to be quicksilver. There was no prospect of assistance coming, I was helpless, and poor darling Woppie seemed quite unnerved; for matters had now come to a crisis.

I told you that, as Ann continued her mad dance, she kept on making dashes at Alfred. Well, now she had grown so furious that, not content with making dashes at my darling, she was regularly chasing him round the kitchen—shrieking, and whooping, and waving her shawl. Oh, it was insulting to a degree, and I thought I should have died for shame; for, after a mad career of quite five minutes, Ann overtook him, and then, before I could do more than utter a faint "Gracious!" the horrid woman flung her arms round his neck.

It is related of the Andaman Islanders that they have such a horror of hirsute appendages that they shave off every hair on their heads. A poor deserter having fallen into their hands, they shaved his head with a piece of bottle glass, but otherwise treated him well. Savage barberism indeed!

Proverbial Philosophy.

"TO make a virtue of necessity" comes from Chaucer, the father of English poetry, and a man of infinite wit; and to him can be traced the saying, "In at one ear, out at the other," though in the quaint language of the day, he said, "One eare it heard, at the other out it went." The proverb, "Man proposes, but God disposes," comes from Pier's Plowman's Vision, a black letter poem, and "Of two evils, the less is always to be chosen," and "When he is out of sight, quickly also is he out of mind"—the originals of "out of sight, out of mind," and "of two evils, choose the least"—are from Thomas à Kempis. Thomas Tusser gave us "The stone that is rolling can gather no moss," "Better late than never," "It is an ill wind that turns none to good," "Christmas comes but once a year," "Safe bind, safe find," "Look ere thou leap, see ere thou go," and "Such master, such man." Chaucer died in 1400, à Kempis in 1471, and Tusser in 1580; so that these are venerable remains.

Cervantes says, "Every one is the son of his own works," and tells of "A face like a benediction." It was Sir Edward Coke, the great lawyer, who said "A man's house is his castle," and Christopher Marlowe, the founder of the great English drama, that wrote of "Infinite riches in a little room," and of a man who was "More knave than fool." It is also to him that we are indebted for "Love me little, love me long."

It is John Milton who tells of "Dark with excessive light," "A heaven on earth," "All hell broke loose," "Heaven's last best gift," "A wilderness of sweets," "Moping melancholy, and moonstruck madness," and "Evil news rides post while good news waits."

It was from John Dryden that we received "None but the brave deserve the fair," "Pity melts the mind to love," "Honour but an empty bubble," "All delays are dangerous in war," and "A knock-down argument; 'tis but a word and a blow."

Wedding Anecdotes.

A YOUNG clergyman, at the first wedding he ever had, thought it was a very good time to impress upon the couple before him the solemnity of the act. "I hope, Dennis," he said to the coachman, with his licence in his hand, "you have well considered this solemn step in life."

"I hope so, your riverence," answered Dennis.

"It's a very important step you're taking, Mary," said the minister.

"Yes, sir—I know it is," replied Mary, whimpering. "Perhaps we had better wait a while."

"Perhaps we had, your riverence," chimed in Dennis.

The minister, hardly expecting such a personal application of his exhortation, and seeing the fees vanishing before his eyes, betook himself to a more cheerful aspect of the situation, and said—

"Yes, of course it's solemn and important, you know; but it's a very happy time, after all, when people love each other. Shall we go on with the service?"

"Yis, your riverence," they both replied.

And they were soon made one in the bonds of matrimony; and that young minister is now very careful how he brings on the solemn view of marriage to timid couples.

A clergyman was called on upon one occasion to officiate at a coloured wedding.

"We assure, sah," said the gentlemanly darkey, "that this yere wedding is to be very *apropos*—quite *à la mode*, sah."

"Very well," replied the clergyman, "I will try to do everything in my power to gratify the wishes of the parties."

So, after the dinner and dancing and supping were over, the groom's best man called again on the minister, and left him the usual fee.

"I hope everything was as your friends desired it," said the urbane clergynian.

"Well, sah, to tell the truth, Mr. Johnson was a little disappointed," answered the groomsman.

"Why, I took my robes," said the minister.

"Yes, sah—it wasn't that."

"I adhered to the rubrics of the church."

"Yes, sah; that was all right."

"I was punctual, and shook hands with the couple. What more could I do?"

"Well, sah, Mr. Johnson he kind o' felt hurt, you see, because you didn't salute the bride!"

The War Correspondent.

BY THE WANDERING JEW.

A DASHING AFFAIR BY YOURS TRULY.

I'M quite out of breath with my exertions, running here, there, and everywhere—fighting, writing, pursuing, running, and doing everything that man can do for the people amongst whom his lot has fallen.

Indeed, sir, but for the arrangement into which I have entered with you, and which binds me to send you the very cream of the business out here, I should throw up the pen, and take to my proper weapon—the sword.

The Russians have crossed. In fact, poor fellows, they were so hungry, and so determined to get over the Danube, that we let them come. Don't for a moment imagine, though, that it was made a pleasant job for them. Nothing of the kind. The weather was hot, and certain matters combined to make it hotter. But of that anon.

That's a good word, "anon"—is it not? I like it, and use it often. But to resume.

I was sitting with Rublu Pacha in his tent, in company with Faik Pacha, a most intelligent officer, who is about to proceed south, to get up a quantity of Kurds.

We had a delightful conversation on Kurds and their ways. Faik said they were not the cheese; but what could he do? Troops were wanted, and they had to be found; so he must do what was best.

The night was calm and still. Not a sound was to be heard but the whispering of the Danube amongst the sedges on its shores, and nothing was to be seen but the twinkling stars overhead, their

reflections in the bosom of the stream, and the faintly visible lights of Simnitzia directly across the stream.

It was by a remarkable coincidence that Rublu and I should have been settled down in our tent exactly at the very spot where the Russians meant to cross; and I beg you to make a note of the fact that, whereas other correspondents were scattered up and down the stream, I only, your faithful slave (pray excuse this Eastern style of expression) was on the spot.

You may call this accident, if you like. I call it foresight and management. Behold the result.

The black slaves had brought us our coffee, and the fragrant Latakia was ascending in blue vaporous clouds, when suddenly my quick ear caught an unwanted sound.

"Hark!" I ejaculated, laying my finger on my lips. "Whatsh matter, dear boy—whatsh matter?" said Rublu, thickly, for the coffee had been particularly thick and strong.

"The enemy's on the move," I whispered.

"Familysh 'bout to move are requested send for one of Taylorsh catlogs," murmured Rublu.

"I hear their boats on the shore," I whispered again.

"And my bark ish on zhe bay," said Rublu. "Sit dow, Sholomon, dear boy, and have 'nother glash coffee."

"This must be seen to," I exclaimed, seizing him by the shoulder.

"Whatsh matter?" he exclaimed, sleepily—"I'm tired out. Gorabed."

"Wake up," I said.

"Awake, awake, my own love, lute and flute, and—and—and—don't, I shay. Whatsh matter?" said Rublu.

"Don't you hear?" I cried. "There, there, again."

He rose up and gave himself a shake, and then he kicked Faik Pacha, who got up and began squaring at him, till I called his attention to the time when, having no soda or potash water to clear our heads from the fumes of the coffee—which, by the way, is far more intoxicating out here than at home—I produced a Seidlitz powder from my pocket, and, mixing it in a goblet, handed it to Rublu just as it should have begun to fizz.

Unfortunately it did not fizz; for in my haste I mixed a couple of blue papers instead of a blue and a white, and Rublu drank from it very moderately.

"Yes," said Rublu, "I should think the clearing powers of that stuff are pretty good. No more, thank you—much obliged, all the shame. Nextsh time I want to wash, Sholomon, which won't be jush directly, I'll borrow couple packets of thish washing powder. But no more inshide, thank you. Full inshide, plenty room outside passengers. What shay? Whatsh matter? Russians coming over—crossh Danube? Let 'em come. Ready, aye ready. Turkeys never shall be shilaves. Come on, all right! Blow trumpets, beat drums, bang the gongs! Hooray!—who's 'fraid?"

It was time to alarm our camp, for the Russian forces were already advancing.

Rublu and Faik were both unmistakably suffering from the effects of the strong coffee; but, now

that danger had come in reality, they recovered themselves at once, and showed themselves ready for action. Orders were given; here and there cannon began to play on the river, now growing spotted with boats; shells were fizzing, splashing, and bursting over the water, or throwing up fountains of spray; and every now and then a boat disappeared, with its unfortunate freight.

It would be invidious to make remarks; but, in justice to myself, I must say that I stood like Eliza on the wood-crowned height o'er Minden's plain, spectatress of the fight; but, unlike her, using my binocular—a splendid instrument, made by—but no, I will not mention names, it would look too much like an advertisement. I presume that binoculars were not made in Eliza's days. But, as I was saying, it would be invidious to make remarks; but the correspondents of certain influential journals, far from following my calm example, skedaddled in a most disgraceful way, one of them leaving behind his little patent inkstand, and with it I wrote this letter. Of course, I don't mean I am writing with the inkstand, for my deliciously clear handwriting is the work of a pen. I am sitting on a dismounted gun, and my desk is a drum-head court-martial—I mean drum-head without the court-martial—and I am, at the present time of writing, as hollow as that drum.

One sardine, sir, and a Huntley and Palmer have formed my sole nutriment for thirty-six hours; and if food don't soon come, I shall begin to gnaw a Russian, or stifle my hunger with a fez.

But to resume. I walked down to one of the batteries, as Rublu's troops were gathering on the strand, and making their way to the embankment to punish the Russian fleet.

Matters were getting hot; for, in spite of our guns, the Muscovites were evidently bent on crossing in force; while to cover them, there now commenced from the Roumanian shore a perfect *feu d'enfer*.

Sir, you cannot conceive the wild thrill of delight that runs through the bosom and attacks the heart as the cannon thunder, and the great balls come whizzing by or plough up the ground at your feet. It is excitement multiplied by 9876543210, and anything more grandly enjoyable cannot be imagined. There is music to me in the roar of the cannon, and the whistle and screech of the shell; and when it comes to the ping, ping, ping, and the buzzing hum of the rifle ball, I am truly happy, and would not exchange places with His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales himself.

So as to get a good view of what was going on, I walked to the place where our guns were stationed, and there, in the morning light, I could see the expanse of river dotted with Russian boats, the flats on the other side covered with moving columns of troops waiting for embarkation, and the batteries of big guns playing upon us from below Simnitzia, so as to cover the attempt to cross.

I saw in a moment that the attempt would, must be successful; and my thoughts were directed towards Sistova, as a place of retreat previous to retiring upon Rustchuk.

"But, no," I said, "I will not shrink from my

duties. My paper shall have the best work of my hands and brain, and the freshest information, like rolls, all hot from the furious oven of war."

So, going to the officer in command of the guns, I stepped up on the earthen breastwork, and making use of my binocular, I gave him advice as to where to point his gun.

The effect was wonderful. Boat after boat was knocked to pieces, and the wretched Muscovites were drowned.

The Turkish officer smiled and nodded as I stood there, the most conspicuous figure on our side of the Danube; till, watching right across through my glass, I found we had drawn almost the whole of the concentrated fire of the enemy upon our few guns. Shot after shot ploughed up the earth, and battered our breastwork; for they had evidently got our range.

"Come down, brave giaour," said the officer in command of the guns—"we must not lose you."

"Thy servant is no giaour!" I said, indignantly, and stood gazing unmoved through my glass, trying to make out whence came the great massive shells which tore through our earthwork.

At last I made out a low earthwork on the slope below Simnitza; and upon it stood a tall figure, in a long grey coat, and wearing a muffin cap, with a peak thereto.

"The Czarewitch!" I exclaimed.

And I involuntarily raised my hat.

To my great surprise, I found that he, too, was using a binocular, and had it at that moment fixed on me. The consequence was that he returned my salute graciously; and then, issuing his orders, such a fire was directed at our little battery that it was impossible to withstand it, and we were compelled to limber up and retire, fighting inch by inch the pursuers, who swarmed across the river in boats, that seemed to have sprung up suddenly from nowhere.

I was compelled to assume the great coat of a Russian later on, and act the part of spy. It was a risky procedure, for I might have been taken and shot; but I did not pause, and the consequence was that I saw the coming across of the Russians, horse and foot; and, what is more, the coming of a large Turkish monitor, which steamed slowly up. But, evidently fearing the prevalence of that disease which attacks monitors—I mean the torpedo cholic—the captain of the vessel remained for about a couple of hours scanning the Russian boats that were crossing, and then, after doing nothing, with a good deal of smoke she slowly steamed away.

"Nation!" exclaimed a voice at my elbow.

There was a prefix to the exclamation; but of that never mind.

I started and turned round, and to my great joy found that it was Rublu, who, with Faik Pacha and Mustapha, had braved all danger so as to stand by my side and see the crossing.

"This is quite too dreadful!" exclaimed Rublu. "That monitor ought to have destroyed half those boats, and it is doing—"

"Nothing," I said, for he had paused.

"Quite true, dear boy," he said. "Now, there is another monitor up higher, towards Turna."

"Turn'er astern," I said, under my breath.

"Exactly," said Rublu. "And then, as soon as she is in mid-stream, go ahead easy."

"What boat is it?" I said.

"The *Row di Dow*," said Rublu. "I must have an Englishman in command of her. These Turks are so sluggish."

"Send an American," said Mustapha.

"I will," said Rublu.

Mustapha pricked up his ears, but Rublu looked at me.

"For lieutenant," he added. "Solomon, dear boy, will you go for me? Take command of her, and do your best—I mean your worst—amongst these raki-drinking ruffians."

I made a salute without a word, and holding up my finger, Mustapha followed me to do or die.

Six hours later we were on board that monitor, all ready for action, and I had made up my mind to run along with the stream, and, getting well into position to knock the boats over, smash the pontoons, and totally destroy all attempts to make a bridge. But there, one cannot do as one likes.

I had taken my position full in front of the monitor, whose iron sides quivered as the screw thrrobbed, and left a train of foam behind.

I was thoroughly on the alert, and quite prepared for the heavy shot which kept striking us on our port armour, and falling uselessly back into the river. I must confess, however, to being a little taken by surprise as, on coming abreast of a long, low island, Mustapha, who did not display the slightest jealousy at my taking the command, suddenly exclaimed—

"Guess they're arter us, neouw!"

They were; for suddenly from behind the island there darted out four torpedo boats at a tremendous speed, and each carried at the end of a spar, some fifty feet long, a torpedo, ready to blow our brave monitor to shreds.

"Fight the devils with their own weapons, Musty," I said; "you understand the game. As for me, I'll con the ship, and keep her out of their reach, trying now and then to run them down."

Mustapha winked; and as I manœuvred the *Ros di Don*, he contrived to thrust out several torpedoes on our part at the end of spars, and as soon as one of the Russian midges tried to dart in, he offered them a torpedo in return; so that, if they had come near enough to fire our vessel, they would themselves have been blown right out of the water.

How they dodged, and raced, and ran here, there, and everywhere—darting round us, and trying very hard to get close up; but whenever or wherever they approached, Musty was ready for them, and it was wonderfully good fun to see him wait on the alert till one made a dash in, when out went a torpedo to meet it, and it darted away.

It was like so many sword fish, with knobs at the end of their snouts, attacking a whale with similar weapons of its own, ready to meet the aggressors; and so the game went on.

Don't you suppose, though, sir, that I was idle, for I was not.

I had long come to the conclusion that it would be waste of ammunition to fire at these midges with

our great guns, so I set to and tried hard to run them down.

I made the boy hot with issuing orders—going ahead, backing astern, running in every direction; but the little wretches were too nimble for me, and I was a long time getting an opportunity.

At last, though, it came, and I gave the order, backing so sharply that I drove one of the steam torpedo launches close in shore, and in another instant she would have been crushed on the bank, when, by a clean dash, they passed by, only being grazed.

So close were we that I made sure of her, for matters were like this:—

A sharp firing had been going on for some time, and the engineer of the launch had been wounded. He, in his agony and fear, turned off the steam, and it seemed all over with them.

They were very plucky, though, for one of the men jumped overboard, and tried to shove the launch off—an officer leaping on shore; but on seeing me standing there on deck with my hands in my pockets, he turned from trying to push off his boat, and, pulling out his revolver, he had three shots at me, the bullets whizzing by my ears; for which I took off my hat and made him a polite bow.

At that moment another of their men turned the steam on full, the little screw of the torpedo launch went at a terrible rate, and the officer had just time to leap on board as the boat sailed away. As for the man in the water, he was dragged after it, holding on by the gunwale for some distance before they dragged him in.

All this time we had been blazing away at them with our small arms and mitrailleuses, damaging them terribly, and wounding several of their men; and still those daring attacks continued.

"Well, Musty," I said, "what's to be done?" For our position was one of great peril—several more torpedo boats coming out to attack us, and we were helpless to deal with our tiny foes.

"Go back," he said, "or go up sky-high in pieces."

And he made a sign as if we were blown up.

"Don't you think we can get to where they are making the bridge?"

"Sure we can't," he said.

"Then we must return," I said. "Musty, old man, it's what the Turks call kismet."

"True for you, old hoss," he said, taking off his fez, in which he kept his tobacco for chewing.

There was no other chance for us; so I unwillingly took the monitor back to her moorings. She is a good deal damaged with two months' knocking about, and I could do no more.

You must own that it was a plucky affair, sir, on both sides. And, by the way, if you illustrate this, remember I was standing on the deck, with my long beard, plaited in the middle, blowing out over my shoulders, calm as a rock or the Sphinx, my hands in my pockets, save when I saluted the Russian officer, whom I should like to meet at dinner.

I say, by the way, if any one else tries to get the credit for this management of the monitor in the most dashing engagement of the war, you will take my side, stick up for me, and prove that it was your

own correspondent who did the trick, so as to get you the newest news from the seat of war—*Ris tele kabob u pilan probi est*. I salute you, as we say here—How's your shadow?

P.S.—We can't stir. Those Russian beggars have put at least a thousand torpedoes round the monitor. Bless them!

A Very Old Legend.

THE Lambton worm is said to have been created near Lambton, near the Castle of Durham.

Many centuries ago lived the Knight of Lambton, who was a wicked fellow, and used to spend the Sunday mornings fishing; and when he did not catch fish enough, he filled the whole wood with his profanity while the people were going to mass. He was a very wicked sort of person, and had a bad reputation; and one Sunday morning, while he was fishing in the River Wear, he had a strong pull at his hook; but when he took it up he found a little black worm, and he swore until the whole air was purple. He then threw the worm into a well; and after a time he became a convert, and joined the Crusaders, and went to the Holy Land, and distinguished himself for piety—that is, slew a great many Saracens.

While he was over there, engaged in this serious and evangelical occupation, the people around Durham were suffering great things. This little worm had grown and grown in the well where it had been thrown, until at last it emerged from that well, because the well was too small to hold it, and crawled over the land, breakfasting on one village here, and dining on another there, until it came to a little mountain, where it coiled itself nine times round, with its head perched on the top of the mountain, and with nine eyes—for it had nine eyes—glaring over the country. There the terraces are still that were made by the weight of this monster.

Now, this monster having taken up his headquarters on this hill, sallied out and destroyed the neighbourhood. The oracle declared that this monster would not eat anybody up, nor destroy any village, provided they would give it nine cows' milk; and at last a milkmaid was found bold enough to carry milk to the monster. And if a single gill was wasted, the monster would come forth and devour the carrier.

After this, the young knight from Lambton came back from the Holy Land, and determined to engage this monster in battle. The priest told him that if he would challenge him in the centre of the River Weir, he would conquer him, on the condition that he sacrificed the life of the first human being that he met after leaving the water, and that he should be dressed in an armour of razor blades.

The knight had the armour put on. He challenged the monster. It entered the water. It coiled itself around him, and was cut to pieces.

Perhaps I should mention that the knight had tied his dog near by, where he could see it when he left the water, and his old father came along and untied the dog, and the old father himself was the first living being he saw. He could not slay his

father, and the oracle told him the penalty would be that no knight of Lambton should die in his bed for nine generations.

Lady Blanche's Leap.

"NOW, remember, my daughter," said my father, as he carefully tucked me into the corner of the close travelling carriage, "remember my caution. It is all very well for you to preach against intemperance and dissipation in the proper place, and to the proper person; but the Grange and its owner are neither. The old homestead is a quiet, steady building, and your uncle has long ago sorely repented him of the evils you are so fond of crusading against. Poor Walter is not what he was as a young man. In one day he passed from the careless life of a 'man of the world' into the true, humble Christian he is now. So, be careful, daughter, that that hap-hazard tongue of yours does not, unintentionally, wound him."

And then the carriage started away towards what was, to me, a new and undiscovered country, even though it was but thirty miles distant from the quiet country town in which all my young life had been spent.

It was no sudden thing, this visit I was about to make; for years it had been brought up at certain intervals, discussed, and then—laid aside.

And now, at last, I could scarcely realize that I was actually on my way to the much-talked-of Grange, the lonely residence of my father's only brother, Lord Walter Shafton.

The latter, himself, was no stranger to me; for of late years—since, as my father said, he had repented him of the wild life he had hitherto led—his visits at our little parsonage had been of frequent occurrence.

He was a tall, fine-looking man, of some fifty years of age, but so bent and sorrowful, his hair and beard so white, that one ignorant of the truth would have supposed him to be, at the least, ten years older.

That there was a sad story connected with my uncle's sudden change of character—some terrible gulf which had so aged him beyond his years—I had always suspected; but as my kind father seemed to shrink from the subject whenever I ventured to hint my curiosity, I never questioned him.

My anxiety to penetrate the mystery, however, rather augmented than decreased from the check thus put upon it; and I resolved that, before I left the Grange, I would find some means of gratifying my curiosity.

Fortune, fickle dame though she is, in this instance, at least, proved herself my friend; and, in a few days after my arrival, a rare opportunity to attain my object was unexpectedly laid before me, without an effort of my own.

Among my uncle's numerous servants was one who had lived in the family for many years—during my grandfather's lifetime, in fact—and to this faithful old follower Lord Shafton confided my safety during the long rides I so delighted in, he himself being generally unable to bear the fatigue of my wild gallops across the country. One bright morn-

ing, however, I persuaded him to lay aside his books, and enjoy a quiet ride with me; but, fearing that he might wish to return before I was ready, he called old Robert to follow closely after us.

It was, as I have said, a glorious day, and the exhilarating air and motion seemed to act on my uncle's gloom like a charm. He talked, even laughed, as we ambled along a road I had not yet explored; and, in fact, I had never before seen him in such spirits,

The one dark shadow of his life, whatever it might be, seemed, for the time, forgotten; and I gave myself up with delight to study my loved relative in his new character.

"Look, Uncle Walter," I cried, suddenly reining in my horse, "what a beautiful, shady little road that is to the right! Come, let's follow it."

He made no reply, and I glanced round at him.

To my surprise, every trace of his late cheerfulness was gone, and, instead, a dark, deep shadow had spread over his face—darker and more sorrowful than I had ever seen it before.

"I am tired," he said, with the thick, slow utterance of one who struggles to control some great emotion—"I am tired. Go on, if you like. Robert will accompany you."

And then, without another word, he struck his steed with his whip, and was far away before I could reply.

I turned to look for old Robert. He was close at hand, gazing in the direction his master had taken; and there was something so strange in the expression of his face, as he sorrowfully shook his grey head, that I could not resist the impulse that prompted me to turn to him for an explanation of my uncle's abrupt movement.

"What is the matter—do you know, Robert?"

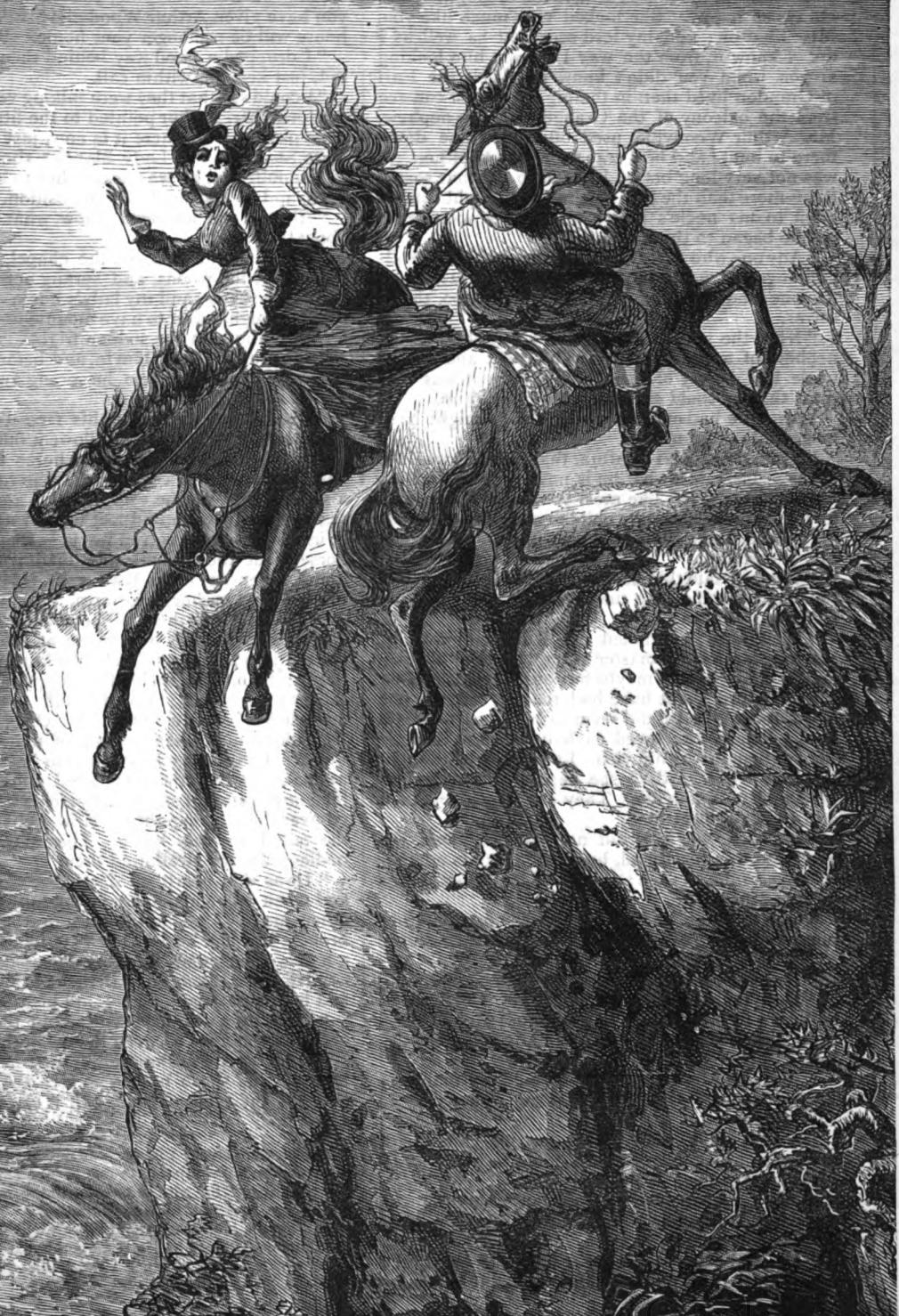
"Ah, yes, miss, I'm afraid I do," answered the faithful old man. "I don't know how my lord came to take this road; he's never been near it for years; not since—"

He paused abruptly, as though conscious that he had touched upon a forbidden subject.

"Now," thought I, as we rode slowly forward on the shady road that had so attracted me—"now to question this old man, or not, *that* is the question.' To fathom the mystery I have so longed to have cleared up; or, because I can only do so by the aid of an old servant, to live on with my curiosity unsatisfied? Some people would say it would be derogatory to my dignity to question a servant. So it would be with an ordinary servant; but Robert is almost like one of the family; he lived in it before Uncle Walter was born. So I will ask him to tell me this story about my cousin Blanche's death, and her father's reformation; for I am certain the two are connected."

And in a moment after my "hap-hazard tongue" was employed in eliciting the following information from the by no means unwilling old servitor.

"It wasn't very long after you were born, Miss Shafton," he said, "that all I am going to tell you happened. You were too little to know anything about it, and it's a sad tale, that folks would rather forget than tell over again. Lady Blanche was my lord's only child, and he thought all the world of



"OVER THE CLIFF."—(Page 294.)

her, and so did every one else. She was like a bright fairy in the house, always full of laughter, and always so happy. She looked very much like you, Miss Shafton; and my lord sees that as well as I do. I know it, from the way I've seen him looking at you, when you didn't know it. Well, the Earl of Grandon lived then in the big house you can see from the balcony of the Grange, and his nephew, Mr. Arthur Woodville, used often to come down there to hunt; and he'd stay for weeks together. It was not very long before I began to see that something more than the love of hunting brought him so often to his uncle's house, and pretty soon other people began to think as I did.

"Any one who saw Lady Blanche and Mr. Woodville together would have said they were just made for one another; and they thought so, too, themselves.

"Now, the young gentleman, though he was the nephew of an earl, was poor himself; and, as his uncle had plenty of sons of his own, it was very plain that he could expect nothing from him.

"Ah, if he had only been rich, things might have been so different now!

"You know, Miss Shafton, that my lord was not always—just—just what he is now. He was a little wild in those days, like most young noblemen, and he did not want his only child to marry a poor man; so he and Lady Blanche had some trouble about Mr. Woodville.

"My lord said that she should dismiss him; and she declared that she never would, and that her father was unjust.

"Well, well," continued old Robert, doubtfully, his affection for his master struggling with his own honest convictions, "maybe he was, just a little. But, then, my lord might have had reasons that no one knew about. But it did seem rather hard to part a young couple, who loved each other, just because the gentleman was not rich. Lady Blanche thought it was, anyhow, and so she kept on being just as kind to Mr. Woodville. They often rode together, and I always went too.

"My lord, you see, did not want to offend the earl, who was his friend, by forbidding his nephew to come to the Grange; and so he had to let things go on as they were.

"One morning, Lady Blanche told me to have her horse and mine ready, as Mr. Woodville was coming to ride with her.

"I brought the animals round to the door, and, as Mr. Woodville had not come yet, I tied them, and went into the house. As I passed the drawing-room door, I heard my lord and Lady Blanche talking.

"My lord was very angry—I could tell that from his loud voice—and Lady Blanche was trying to calm him.

"I went out to the front again, and waited with the horses; but, even there, I could hear my lord's passionate tones.

"Mr. Woodville soon rode up, and Lady Blanche came out, looking very pale and distressed, in spite of her efforts to seem gay.

"My lord came out into the hall with her, and I heard him say, too low for Mr. Woodville to hear—

"Now, mark my words, Blanche—if, when you come back from this ride, you cannot tell me that you have given Arthur Woodville his dismissal, this house will be no longer your home. Remember!"

"I dropped a good way behind then, as I always did, just keeping within call.

"I could see that they were talking very earnestly, and once Mr. Arthur pointed to the little chapel we were passing—ah, there it is now, just ahead of us, Miss Shafton—but Lady Blanche shook her head. I misdoubt that he was asking her to marry him at once, and so end my lord's opposition.

"Ah, no one will ever know what they talked about!

"They had just passed the chapel, when a deer burst from the woods, and sprang across the road, just before them, and my lady's horse—a wild thing that she ought never to have mounted—became perfectly frantic with the sudden fright.

"She could not hold him in, and, before Mr. Woodville could catch the rein, he sprang away down the road, at a terrible pace.

"The young gentleman, his face as white as a sheet, dashed after, and I followed, full speed.

"It was an awful place for a horse to get frightened; for, not half a mile ahead, the road comes to a sudden stop, on the very brink of a cliff, with the sea roaring two hundred feet below! We, all three of us, thought of this, and my lady tried to turn her horse; but the animal was mad with fear, and minded her no more than a fly. Mr. Woodville pushed his own horse forward, and, just before the Arabian reached the cliff, he managed to pass it, and then turned his own horse at the very end of the road, so as to completely block it up. On came the Arabian, and instead of stopping, as we all thought he would, he came, full speed, right up against Mr. Woodville's horse. Oh, Miss Shafton, I shudder now when I think of that terrible moment! Lady Blanche's Arabian was a powerful animal, and the other staggered under the shock. The next instant, I saw both horses, with their riders, go over the cliff together. How I got home to tell the tale I scarcely know. They never found the bodies—the sea swallowed them up.

"I was sick nearly to death for a month after; and when I got about again my lord was like another man—kind and gentle, and nearly heart-broken, just like he is now. He has never spoken a harsh or angry word to any one since.

"He parted from Lady Blanche in anger, you see, and he never forgets that—God bless him!

"Well, they will meet again, and then there will be no more anger between them—nothing but love.

"Here we are at the end of the road now, Miss Shafton, and those bushes yonder are just on the brink of the cliff. People call it 'Lady Blanche's Leap.'

"EAT your bread, Charles—do not fling it away," said a learned and good judge to one of his family the other day; adding, "for who knows, in the vicissitudes of this life, if you may not some day want it?" The old man had to cough, look learned, and go away, when the youngster answered, more logically than his parent, "If I eat it, how can I have it when I want it?" This is the result of a learned judge having children.

A Box—With Care.

"HERE, Smith, come and put this gentleman's luggage on the 'bus."

"Right, sir—comin'."

"There's no hurry, man. Go and put on your jacket—it rains hard."

"Oh, I don't want no jacket, sir," said Smith, my porter, merrily.

And going out into the rain with a portmanteau and bag, he placed them on the 'bus, and returned with his shirt sleeves well wetted.

"Now, look here, Smith," I said. "You are here in my charge, and I insist upon your putting on your jacket. You'll be laid up with rheumatism, and I shall have no end of bother."

You see, this was my first station on the G. O. R.—the Great Overland Railway; and being very young, I was very important.

I was only *locum tenens*, for the regular station-master was up in London about a box that had been opened. But, permanent or temporary, I was too zealous to have anything neglected; and the way in which I kept Smith and the big lubberly boy in company's cord—who was a kind of deputy porter—hard at work was something startling.

Five minutes after the above conversation, I came upon Smith again—in his shirt sleeves.

"I thought I told you to put on your jacket, Smith," I said, with railway official imperiousness—I dare say you know what that is.

"Yes, sir—you did, sir," he faltered.

And he trembled before me. I was five feet six, and very boyish-looking; while Smith was six feet one, and a great, burly, big-whiskered, broad-shouldered fellow, who could have put me in his pocket.

"Then why have you not done as I told you?"

"It's—it's too hot, sir, for jackets," he stammered.

"Stuff!" I exclaimed; "it's a cold easterly wind, and going to be a wet night."

Then, feeling my dignity at stake, I walked up to Smith quite fiercely.

"Now, sir," I said, "go into the porters' room, and put on your jacket."

The boy stood and stared, and looked uneasy, as Smith said to him, in a piteous, abject way—

"Jemmy, go in and fetch my jacket, there's a good chap."

Jemmy backed away, and ran into the third-class waiting-room.

Just then there was the roaring of a coming fast train, and Smith had to seize his flag, and hold it out till the train had thundered by.

The flag was in a corner of the platform, not rolled up, but lying down in a heap, and I saw Smith go at it very cautiously, shrinking back two or three times; and at last, rendered desperate by the approach of the train, he caught sharply at the stick, gave the flag a shake and a jerk, sending both into the middle of the platform; and then, apparently satisfied, he caught up the stick again, and held out the signal, just as the driver of the coming train began to whistle fiercely before passing the station. Then the train thundered through, and Smith went cautiously back to the corner, and rolled and stood the flag up in a more businesslike way.

"Now, sir, your jacket, if you please," I said, severely.

And, seeing no appeal in my face, Smith walked into the porters' room on tiptoe, and I followed him.

"Why don't you hang your jacket up, sir?" I asked.

For his cord garment lay in a heap on the floor, beneath the pegs provided for his use.

He looked at me curiously, and then at the garment, but made no answer; neither did he make any effort to pick it up, till, in sheer annoyance at what I called his stupidity, I snatched up the jacket, and threw it to him.

He uttered a yell and darted back, letting the jacket fall to the floor, where he looked at it intently for a few moments, before taking up a long stick used for attaching a light to for starting the station lamp; he then began to stir the garment about, shaking and poking it with fear depicted in every feature, ending by beating it smartly and thrusting the pole up the sleeve.

"Why, whatever is the matter with the fellow?" I exclaimed, half laughing, half annoyed at his antics.

"What does all this mean?"

"Mean?" he grumbled—"you'll find out soon enough; and then, perhaps, you'll be quite as bad as I am."

As he spoke, he shook his jacket once more, and felt the pockets cautiously from the outside. At last he put it on in a shamefaced way, and stood staring at me.

"What's it all about, Smith?" I said. "You're not mad, are you?"

"No, I ain't mad," he said, sulkily; "but it's enough to drive any fellow half mad, that it is."

"What is? There, come, why don't you speak up?"

"Oh, I don't want to upset you too," he grumbled.

"Upset me, too! Come, that's too good. You don't suppose I should go on like you, do you?"

"Yes, and wuss," he cried, savagely. "Just you get feeling, as it may be anywhere at any time—under the table, among the lamp rags, in yer jacket or yer hat, or crawling up the legs of yer trowsers, and just see how you'd like it. I shall cut an' run—that's what I shall do."

"Come, come, Smith, what is it—what is the thing that tortures you?"

"Oh, I don't want to upset you too, sir. Two on us havin' it on our minds is bad enough."

"Luck in odd numbers," I said, laughing. "Come, speak out, man."

"Well, if you will have it, look here," he said—read that there."

He took a dirty telegraph form out of his pocket, and handed it to me.

"I copied that out to keep me recklecting of it," he said. "Not as I was likely to forget, nor ever shall be."

"But what's this?" I said.

"Read it, sir. It's a copy of the tallygrum as came down here 'bout the box."

"About what box?" I said.

"The box aour reg'lar station-master, Mr. Barclay, 's gone up about; though I thinks, and allers shall, as it was that theer box."

I glanced down at the paper, on which was written:

"Search thoroughly at once; and go to work most cautiously, as your own care will suggest. The box held a rattlesnake, and its bite is fatal."

"Well, I said, laughing—rather uneasily, though—"did you search?"

"Aint we done nothin' else but search ever since?" said Smith, sharply.

"But what does it all mean?" I said, with the facts of the case rapidly assuming shape in my mind.

"Well, you see, sir, it was this how. Last Chewsday's a week since, along o' a lot more things, a small box was put out here from the guard's van of the twelve twenty-four down; and, after the train had gone, I seen as it wasn't for our station at all, but for somebody down at Liverpool, a hundred miles furder on. I thinks then as it was shoved out by mistake; but I've thought since as the guard had fun' out what was the kind of customer he'd got in his van, and he wouldn't have it with him any more.

"All I could do was to put the box in the orfice, and as I did so I noticed as it was all full o' little 'oles, and smelt 'orrif curious-like.

"That's some new-fangled kind o' game, Jemmy," I says to the boy.

"And just then there was a bit of a rattle in the box which nearly made me drop it, and Jemmy says—

"There's summat alive in theer," he says—"that there is."

"Well, 'taint no business o' yours, Jemmy, if there is," I says.

"And I puts the box down, goes about my work, and forgets all about it till two days arter; when there comes an inquiry from Liverpool for that very box.

"What box is it, Smith?" says Mr. Barclay. "I don't know nothing about no box."

"And as he spoke, I see Mr. Jemmy looking curious-like.

"Why, sir," I says, "it's one I oughter ha' reported."

"And I told him about how it had been putt outer the guard's van, and how I had putt it in the orfice.

"But I've seen no such box," he said. "Something alive, too! Why, the thing will be dead."

"Oh, I put it in the orfice," I said—"Jemmy and me; and here it is now," I says, going in with him. "No it aint!"

"I was that took aback, sir, that 'ang me if I knew whether I was a-standin' on my 'ead or my 'eels; for the box wasn't there.

"I'll swear I putt it here," I says—"didn't I, Jemmy?"

"Yes," he says, "I see you do it."

"Then, it must be here still," says Mr. Barclay.

"And we had a good hunt for it, being only a little box, you know, about as big as a small chist—foot square or so.

"It took us a 'our, though, to find that box; and then, if it wasn't tucked away right at the back; and when we got it out it was empty, some one havin' opened it.

"Mr. Barclay looked at me, and I looked at Jemmy, and Jemmy looked at the box; and then, one arter the other, we took our solemn oaths as we knew nothin' about what was inside; while the ag-

gravatin' part of it was that we all fancied it was the others as done it.

"Don't smell very nice," says Mr. Barclay, at last. "Are you sure it was fastened up when you took it up, Smith?"

"Well, sir, I couldn't swear no oaths, sir," I says; "but I could almost say as it was screwed down when I brought it in."

"We'll send it on," he says at last.

"And after writing a report to Liverpool, send it on he did, with the empty box, which had got some sand and bits of pebbles in the bottom.

"That very night comes this here tallygram as I showed you; and sarch we did, I can tell you, feeling 'orrif all the while, knowing, as we did, as a desperate kind o' snake was about; and it was about that, and one or two more unpleasant things, as Mr. Barclay had to go up, and you came down to take charge of the place."

"But you don't mean to say," I said hoarsely, and with a white sensation stealing over me, and making my flesh feel goose-skinned all over—"you don't mean to say that the rattlesnake has not been found?"

"But that's just what I do say, sir," he said, with a look of demoniacal glee upon his countenance. "That thar pysonous snake's somewhere about the station, sir. And just let me ask you this here, sir—aint it enough to make any one keerful how he puts on his jacket, after it's been a-layin' down on the floor, knowin'as it is the natur of these things to creep an' crawl, and get into warm corners, ready to spring out upon yer, and sting yer with their pysonous rattle tails?"

"They don't sting with their tails, Smith," I said, with a strange huskiness in my voice. "They bite—poison fangs—they don't sting."

"Oh, don't they just!" said Smith. "Don't you tell me. It aint much as I knows, but I do know that there."

"But are you sure it's about the place still?" I said, faintly, hoping that he was wrong.

"Sure as eggs is eggs," he said. "I can feel as it is, sir. It gives yer the creeps, sir, and so you'll find out before long."

Before long! I had found it out already; and from that moment the insane desire was upon me to leap into the first train that came, and escape from the horrible place. I was ready to leave everything—my clothes, books, post—all, to get away from the horror that encompassed me.

If I went to stamp tickets, I was afraid of a hideous head peering out of a pigeon-hole. If I went to the money drawer, I started back in dread, lest the wretched thing should start up from its coils. I leaped back often fancying I heard rustlings in my papers; and as to the garden, whose flowers had been left in my charge by Mr. Barclay, I dared not go down it.

In fact, I was worse than poor Smith, who used to look at me pityingly, stroke his beard, and say sadly—

"Yes, sir, you've got it bad."

I instituted a regular search; and every moment that was not taken up by the train service was devoted to hunting for the horrible reptile.

"It aint a bit o' use, sir," said Smith. "He's too

artful, that's about what he is. He hides hisself away, a-waiting till his time comes, and then he lays hold on you, and it's all over. I knows all about it, sir, from a relation of mine as was over in Amerike, and told me all about their ways. We sha'n't find him, sir. The only way to get rid of him is to burn the station down; and the company wouldn't like that."

I began to think that Smith was right, for find the beast we could not. At the same time, though, it regularly haunted that station, and was everywhere. I dared not put on my boots of a morning, or slippers, or a night costume, without carefully shaking them first with the tongs. At night, after undressing, I have bounded into bed lest the creature should dart out at me from beneath; and as soon as I have felt the cold sheets, I have bounded out again, in a cold perspiration, feeling sure that the reptile was in the bed.

One night, I lay perspiring profusely, listening to a low, rustling noise, which I knew at once was caused by the snake creeping amongst some papers.

I knew then where it must have been—hidden behind the wainscot inside the bed-room cupboard, and at last it had crawled forth, and was parading my bed-room.

Could it reach me, as I lay in bed?

That was the question I kept on asking myself, till, in my horror, I thrust the clothes over my head, and lay there till, utterly exhausted, I went to sleep.

I lay there the next morning till Smith and Jemmy, summoned by my shouts, came up, and searched the place, finding nothing but a well-gnawed mouse's hole, though I was ready to declare that no mouse ever made the noise I heard.

A fortnight of misery passed at that horrible station, and if that period of suspense had been kept up much longer, I believe I should have been turned into a nervous monomaniac.

It was put a stop to, however, by a country fellow coming into the station one morning with something hanging over a stick, and as he stood it down upon the floor of the booking office, I recognized the *cro-talus horridus*—the deadly rattlesnake.

"Did ye ever see such a ahdder as that?" he said. "Why, she's six foot and a half long."

"It's the rattlesnake, Smith," I said, shrinking away.

"It's a ahdder—that's what it is," said the countryman. "There's a mort o' em 'bout in the woods; but that's the biggest I ever see."

"Is it dead?" said Smith, approaching the beast cautiously.

"Been dead weeks, I should say," said the man. "I fun' it in your ditch, in the water."

There was joy in the station that day, as, after giving the countryman a shilling for his find, I sent up word of the discovery; and that night I slept soundly, for the first time for many days.

I don't know how much the company paid for compensation for that escape; but though Jemmy would not own to it, Smith swore he got meddling with the box, and the snake had darted out.

"And all I wonder at is," said Smith, "as the thing didn't sting him."

"If it had done, it would have—"

"Served him right," said Smith, shortly. "They're mortal strong in the tail."

Bears in their Haunts.

HUNTERS say that there are two sorts of bear—viz., the long-legged and the short-legged, but this is not the case; there is but one species of bear in all these provinces. Individuals of this species differ much in appearance—some are round, plump, and short-limbed; others gaunt, leggy, and scraggy. This depends upon age and condition.

The Anticosti bear is famed for the beauty of its fur, which is at its prime in the months of April and May. The muzzle and ears are yellower than those of the bears on the mainland. On the south shore of the St. Lawrence, bears den in hollow trees; and in the fine weather they may often be seen climbing the trees, and sporting about amongst the branches in a clumsy, cumbersome way that seems to indicate that one or other of them will go headlong to the ground before they have been climbing after one another long; but somehow they manage to keep their position by means of their long, strong claws, and it is not often that they come to grief.

They retire in November, and come out again in April, at which time the females have cubs, generally two, sometimes three. The cubs stay with the mother till the following spring, and then shift for themselves.

In spring and early summer they feed entirely on fish and fish spawn, which is thrown upon the beach by the sea. A large ugly fish, called by the French *poule de mer*, is Bruin's favourite tackle, though he is very fond of capelin and herring spawn, both of which are cast up in immense quantities. After a storm, I have walked along the beach for half a mile up to my ankles in herring spawn. Bears are very fond of digging and scraping in the kelp and seaweed, where they pick up grubs and insects. When Bruin is hungry he comes out of the woods, and strolls along the beach a little above high-water mark. When he finds a *poule de mer*, he carries it off into the woods, there to devour it at his leisure, crouching over it the while, as he holds it between his paws.

His action looks awkward—short, shuffling steps wide apart, and head wagging from side to side; but for all this, he gets along pretty fast—picking his steps, too; for the water is cold in spring, and he does not care to wet his feet. Neither does he like the cold sea breeze; but in fine warm weather, particularly in the mornings and evenings, he spends a good deal of time on the beach, rambling about, licking up the spawn, and grubbing and rolling in the kelp. His food he finds more by nose than by sight.

Young bears are as playful as kittens, and when two or three of them meet, they play high jinks in the seaweed. The best chance to shoot them is in the morning and the evening, when the tide is on the ebb.

Paddling along the coast of Anticosti, it is quite the exception not to see one or two bears in the course of the day. I have seen as many as seven in one day. There are two ways of approaching them. When the wind is blowing on shore, the sportsman must stalk them from the land side; when the wind is off-shore, the better way is to paddle up to them.

After losing two or three bears through ill-luck and bad shooting, I once managed to bag a very fine one. We saw him from the canoes; and, as there

was a very heavy swell on, we landed, and stalked him from the shore side. The noise we made, scrambling and forcing our way through the bushes, was great; but the noise of the breakers was even greater, and we stalked him to within thirty yards. When I fired, he fell down, and moaned for nearly a minute, when we finished him.

When a bear moans, he is a gone coon; but I always make a point of hammering away at them until they are stone dead. By neglecting this precaution, I lost a fine old she-bear and three cubs on the following day.

It happened that my man Donald had cut his hand so badly that he could not carry my smoothbore as usual. We saw the bear and her cubs approaching along the beach, and, sitting down behind a rock, awaited them. When about forty yards off, she stopped, half facing me, half broadside on, and I fired at the near fore shoulder. The bullet struck precisely where I aimed, and rolled her over like a log. Thinking she was dead, I fired the other barrel at a cub, and missed. As I was leisurely reloading, I heard Donald sing out, "Shoot him again, Mr.—, shoot him again!" Looking up, I saw the old lady dancing about in the most eccentric way, and pursuing the wound in her shoulder as a dog hunts his tail; and before I could get a cap on my rifle, she disappeared into the thick bush.

I followed for a hundred yards or so, not ten yards astern, guided by the crackling of the bushes; but she escaped—to die, of course. I behaved like a muff in not making sure of her with the second barrel, as I might have known that the cub could easily have been killed afterwards. I deserved to lose her; nevertheless it was very heart-breaking at the time. To this day I have a bit of her shoulder-blade, two inches long, that was knocked off by my bullet.

The Indians use buck-shot for bear-shooting, in preference to bullets; and at short distances—say thirty yards and under—I believe a charge of shot is the more deadly, and without doubt the more certain.

Another day, as I was turning round a point, with my rifle under my arm, I met a bear face to face, fifteen yards off. I hardly know which was the more surprised of the two. I fired at his head, but the jaw-bone, which was smashed to atoms, turned the bullet from the vitals, and I only managed to give him a flesh wound with the second barrel as he scuttled into the bush.

Shooting bears out of a canoe requires some practice on the part of the shooter, and considerable skill on that of the canoe-men. Bruin does not mind a canoe in the least, so long as the wind is in the right direction, and he can see no sudden movement of the paddles. Wary in the extreme about any unusual appearance or sound on the land side, he never expects danger seaward. He looks back over his shoulder along the beach, peers into the bush, and now and then stops for a good sniff to windward; but he is so accustomed to see seals, floating ice, and driftwood, that he never looks out for an enemy in that direction, and takes no notice of a skilfully handled canoe.

Crouching down, with nothing visible but our heads, I have been paddled to within thirty yards of a bear. The canoe-men never take their eyes off him. When

he feeds or looks away, with noiseless but vigorous strokes they propel the light craft swiftly towards him. When he looks up, they are still as statues. A charge of buck-shot at thirty yards is always fatal.

Before I have done with the Anticosta bear, I must mention one little incident illustrative of the curiosity of his disposition. As we were paddling along the north shore of the island, we saw a bear run up a little gully in a precipitous cliff, carrying a *poule de mer* in his mouth. I immediately landed, and, posting myself right under the cliff, twenty yards or so to leeward of his road, or rather stairs, I told my men to shove off and watch. I never stirred for twenty minutes, expecting to see him come down again where he went up; but, as I heard subsequently from my men, who almost split their sides with laughing, "Mooym" (as the Micmacs call him) came to the top of the rock twenty feet or so straight above my head, and, putting his head over, watched me intently for nearly a minute. Eventually he wended me, and made off.

Colour Blindness.

A PROPOS of the inability to tell the difference in the colours of railway signals and the consequent accidents, a gentleman says:—

"I am one of the so-called colour blind, and have given some attention to the phenomena. At sea I never could declare the colour of a light. On shore I am unable to describe colours, although I am not so badly off as the person referred to in your extract of this morning, who could not distinguish between milk and wine. I have never known a woman colour blind, and I find my daughters able to distinguish the difference between the finest shades of colour, to all of which they apply names of a somewhat fanciful character. Put a white and a red light side by side, and few, I think, would fail to describe the difference; but put both lights at a great distance, then remove one, and your so-called colour blind subject is at once in doubt. To some persons all wines of a class are alike. Red wine is red wine to them, and they could not determine the quality, character, or vintage to save their lives. Why? Simply because they are without experience; and so it is, I think (with deference to the opinion of those better informed), with colour. I am certain that a week's instruction in colour would enable me (colour blind as I am said to be) to pass a competitive examination with an experienced dyer. I attach much importance to the statement I hazard about the ladies, doubting, as I always do, the possibility of female colour blindness."

A COUNTRY girl wrote to her lover:—"Now, George, don't you fail to be at the Nightingales' Retreat to-night." George wrote back that "in the bright lexicon of youth—Webster's Unabridged—there's no such word as *Fale*."

WHAT A FLIRT IS.—The Washington correspondent who interrupts an account of one of Mrs. Fish's receptions with the following outburst, must have a slight personal grievance:—"The flirt is the painted hyena of society, the lamb-fleece-disguised ravenous wolf of the affectionate fold. Her fangs drip with the gore of the foolishly fond and true."

The Egotist's Note-book.

DURING the recent exciting debates in the French Assembly, two of the deputies, of opposite opinions, met in one of the refreshment-rooms.

"You are an excellent trimmer," exclaimed the senior deputy, addressing the other, "but you are not a true Republican."

"Not a good Republican, sir! I am so good a Republican, that if I could be King of France to-morrow, I would—ah! I would think twice before accepting the honour."

Virtue is generally rewarded, though the proverb gifts it with unselfishness. There is a cripple in the London streets, a legless gentleman, who used to drag himself along the *pavé* holding in one hand a few laces as his *raison d'être*—I can't say *locus standi* when speaking of a "*neped*." This gentleman has prospered so, that, becoming "fat and scant of breath," he has afforded himself a tray, drawn by a donkey; and in this he sits, beside an organ, driving himself from place to place, then pulling up to regale the neighbourhood with sweetest strains ground fine. The donkey rather likes it—judging from the play of his capacious ears.

What a wonderful mingling of gratitude and courage is contained in the small soul of the London *gamin*! Several times recently I have seen urchins escape from a frightful death by the sudden pulling up of omnibus horses—never of cabs. Boy has been "cutting behind" some vehicle, probably, and he thanks the man who saves him from being trampled by hoofs and crushed by wheels, by either thrusting out his tongue or placing his fingers to his nose.

As to the cabs, Hansom seems to have an idea that he rules the road; and if a foot-passenger is in the way, he perhaps shouts "Hi," but never stops. If the obstruction happens to be another vehicle, he pulls up directly, apparently on the principle that, though flesh may heal, panels and paint are costly. Hansom knocked over the writer a short time since, sending him flying, and then expressed his sympathy as follows:—"Well, you must be a fool!" I certainly did feel dizzy.

A friend informs me that he dropped into the Surrey Theatre the other night, to find it contain a very few people, but a great many nutshells, whose contents were being ground up by the audience with an audible munch. By the way, they were not chestnuts, neither were they sailors' wives who "munched, and munched, and munched." The programme bore these words:—"To enable visitors to obtain good seats and avoid the crowd, the side doors are open half an hour before the usual time; an extra 6d. is charged to all parts by this entrance, except the gallery, which is 3d. extra." This is very kind of that good soul, the "People's Caterer," but the crowd had forgotten to come. When was there a crowd waiting to get into the Surrey Theatre?

A critic who, like most critics, is himself a drama-

tist, on being asked to say what constituted a good farce, promptly replied, "A piece which will make somebody laugh besides its author."

If this condition were generally insisted upon, where would half the modern farces be?

BROOKS OF SHEFFIELD: "Pa, why did Mr. Tompkins shoot the moon? Did he hit it?"

PAPA (learnedly): "As regards the latter question, my son, I believe he did not make a hit of it, and that, paradoxical as it may seem, is one reason why he shot at the fair Diana. Another is, that there was some quarrel about a certain Lady Day, and the rent in Mr. Tompkins's pocket. Do you understand?"

BROOKS OF SHEFFIELD: "No, pa. Did she tear his pocket?"

PAPA: "Ah, my son, it requires time to thoroughly comprehend these matters."

BROOKS: "But who is Lady Day, pa?"

PAPA: "Wife of the landlord, my son."

A young gentleman to his future mother-in-law: "Emmeline is, no doubt, a charming girl; but she is a little irregular in her orthography."

"Well, yes, I must confess that her spelling might be improved."

"Improved! Fancy, now—she sent me a letter yesterday, beginning 'My derest Charly.'"

"There, now, what a silly goose! And yet I corrected that letter myself."

"Myderest Charly" began to think that the weather would be a more satisfactory topic of conversation.

Outside a West-end music-hall: An old fellow, standing at the entrance; a youngster hunting up the ends of cigars about the pavement and in the gutter:

Aged individual, rather dolefully: "Have you got some for me?"

"Yes, old boy."

"Ah, but I mean a nice comfortable one!"

A friend of a well-known bibliophile, looking over his books the other day, saw one that interested him very much, and asked for the loan of it.

"Lend you a book!" said the bookworm. "Impossible."

"Why?"

"Because I borrowed a book of you long since, and you have never asked for it back again. I could not lend my books to a man with such a memory as that."

Cabmen are curious creatures. The other day, a gentleman on getting out of a Hansom gave the driver his fare and a gratuity, remarking at the same time that the horse was a sorry brute.

The driver pocketed his fare, and then, flinging the extra money down on the pavement, exclaimed—

"I don't want tips from folks as grumbles at my 'oss."

A journalist, not particularly noted for the neatness of his dress or the whiteness of his linen, is in the habit of writing his notes and making memoranda on the wristbands of his shirt, when they will take the ink. The other day he was seen to note

down after this fashion an invitation to dinner, which, he said, he was exceedingly anxious to have before him, so that he might not forget it. Yet the dinner was not to come off for about a fortnight!

A horse-dealer, after dilating upon the merits of an animal which he desired to sell, at length secured a customer. As soon as the bargain was concluded, a stranger stepped up to him and said:

"Now that you have sold the horse, and the buyer is gone, I can speak frankly to you, can't I?"

"Certainly."

"Very well. Then I may tell you that you know nothing about horses."

"Perhaps not," replied the dealer, with a sly wink; "but I know how to manage the muffs who come to buy them."

A lady had a coachman, an excellent sort of man, but rather addicted to the bottle. As she purposed leaving town for a time, she got him to promise that he would keep sober during her absence. He faithfully kept his word. On the very day of her return, however, the coachman disappeared, and when he came home at night he was shockingly intoxicated. The next morning he was severely reproached by his mistress.

"I beg pardon, madam," said he; "I promised not to get drunk during your absence, and I didn't. But when you came home, madam, I was quite within my right. My promise only lasted till you came back."

In a drawing-room:

"Have you noticed Mr. G.? He is as mute as a sphinx. He's really too trying."

"How so?"

"Just imagine, when he is about to say anything, he asks you to listen."

"Well, what then?"

"Why, you may listen; for he never says a word."

When the late Frederick Lemaitre played Robert Macaire, his accomplice Bertrand asked him to defend him at his trial.

"I will be your advocate," said Robert; "but you must give me twenty pounds."

Bertrand pulled a face.

"Fifteen pounds?"

Bertrand shrugged his shoulders.

"Ten pounds—five pounds. No? Well, give me ten shillings, and I'll plead for extenuating circumstances."

Two gentlemen were playing cards in the train from Bath to London.

"It's very odd," remarked one of them; "we've been playing a long time, and I haven't seen a single King."

"It's very natural," replied the other, "seeing that you have the King of Hearts up your sleeve, and I have the other three in my boot."

They didn't play any more after that.

A gentleman was recounting an anecdote to a country squire—

"It occurred," said he, "only the other day. I re-

member reading something like it in one of Fenimore Cooper's novels. You haven't read Fenimore Cooper's works, have you?"

"No; but I have Sir Walter Scott's, if they'll do."

At an old curiosity shop:

"Antique!" exclaimed the dealer, holding up a bit of blue and white; "all that lot is genuine antique."

"You are quite sure?"

"I have verified it. Besides, if it were modern, do you think it would be so ugly as that?"

"That's true," replied the customer.

And the bargain was concluded.

Authors, we know, are very sensitive individuals. A short time since, a new piece was brought out at a West-end theatre, and the author was marching up and down the passages in a terrible state of excitement. Suddenly, he heard a noise in the theatre. It might have been applause, but he thought it was hisses and cries of disapproval. Unable to bear his anxiety any longer, the dramatist rushed into the street. Just as he got out, somebody threw a jug of water from a window, and it splashed upon him. The author, in his abstraction, imagined that it was raining, and at once put up his umbrella. He was wandering about in this fashion when his friends came out to congratulate him on the success of his piece. It was a beautiful moonlight night.

The statue mania is on the increase, and an effigy of King Alfred has been set up at Wantage. As public feeling wills; but in the name of all that is reasonable, why should not Adam have a statue? He did a great deal for posterity, which nobody can deny.

I hope we do not make so many press errors concerning matters French as our neighbours in Paris do concerning matters that are English. I took up a late number of the *Figaro*, to find it announced that the sole agent of the paper in London dwelt in "Princess"-street, Leicester-square—a street that, I believe, has no existence feminine, though there is a Princess-street. In the same number, a sale of horses was announced to take place at Knightsbridge, and several times over the auctioneers' names were given as Tottersall.

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The Domestic Confessions of Mrs. Chignal.

THE EIGHTH.

"**I**T was only to save herself from falling, my love," said Alfred.

And so it seemed; for as he unlaced the horrible woman's arms from round his neck, she sank back into a chair, and seemed to go right off to sleep at once.

"Oh, Alfred!" I groaned.

"What's the good of 'Oh, Alfreding' a fellow?" he panted, wiping the perspiration off his forehead. "Here you go and fill the house full of wild Irish-women instead of servants, get me nearly torn to pieces, and then you cry out 'Oh, Alfred!' Now, then, what's to be done?"

"Send her to bed," I sobbed; "and then we must lock her in till we can hand her over to the police in the morning."

"Can't give a woman in custody for that," he said, sulkily. "Here, come along—don't sit there—and let's get her to bed. Hang me if ever I saw such a house as ours is!"

"I'm sure it's no fault of mine, Alfred," I said, peevishly; for it did seem so hard.

"Of course not," he answered. "It's all mine, every bit of it. I engaged the woman; I sent her out for a holiday; I let her come home excited; and I made her dance round the kitchen afterwards."

"If you wish to break my heart, Alfred," I sobbed, "pray go on."

"Break your heart?" he said, contemptuously—"not I. There, get up."

I felt as if all the strength had gone out of my limbs when I tried to rise; but I made an effort, and then Alfred went on one side of the creature—I can't call her woman—and I went on the other, and we got her upon her legs.

How we managed to get her to the top of the house has been a mystery to me ever since, for the creature seemed to be like a great heavy doll made of blanc-mange, and she bent and gave way in the most frightful manner. As to supporting herself, that was quite out of the question; all she did was to let her head roll and wobble about, as she smiled at us good-temperedly, and kept on saying—

"Aisy now!"

I said good-temperedly, for it seemed so strange, when she was being bumped and banged about as she was. Sometimes it was her head against the wall; then she was bumped up against the balustrade; and once she slipped, and went down nine stairs with a rush, for we couldn't stop her, and she didn't mind a bit.

But at last we got her to her room, and lifted her on to her bed, where, after taking away candle and matches, we left her and locked her in.

I did not say anything to Alfred—he was too cross as it was; but I had seen enough to satisfy me. The wretch had actually been for her holiday in my glacé silk, and it was crumpled into a thorough rag. I had made another discovery, too—it was my parasol that she had thrown on to the dresser, amongst the dirty plates that Keziah had not had time to wash up; while, as if to make things ten times worse still,

there was her purse on the kitchen table, choking, gasping, and open-mouthed, because it was full of little bits of printed card, which Alfred said were pawnbrokers' duplicates, and which we found, one and all, related to things belonging to us which the wretch had pledged.

I did not sleep a wink that night—Alfred says I did, for he heard me snore, which is, of course, a gross libel—and I lay wondering all sorts of things. I got to be so nervous at last, that I went up and listened at Ann's door at least half a dozen times, for fear she should be suffocating or falling off the bed into uncomfortable positions; though I don't know why I should, when the wicked wretch behaved so badly to us.

In the morning there she was, making things gritty in the kitchen, just for all the world as if nothing had happened. But we had her in, and a pretty talking to she had; and then she burst into a long, low, wailing howl—something like that made by a dog when it's shut out—and she confessed all about pledging the things. And there was a nice list—table cloths and napkins, doyleys, three silver tea spoons, two of my dresses—and, actually, if she hadn't had the impudence to take my sealskin and pledge that.

We were just going to send her about her business—for we could not carry the matter into a police-court—when a cab stopped at the door. There was a tremendous ring at the bell, and if, actually, the girl didn't wipe her eyes, and go off as coolly as if we had not both been scolding her for hours.

The next minute she was back.

"Here's a woman, mum, as says her name's Padlock; but I wouldn't let her in, because she's got a big bag, with things to sell."

"Run, Alfred!" I exclaimed—"it must be dear aunt."

He went off very slowly, for he and dear aunt don't agree very well; and a few minutes after, he came back, leading in our visitor, in a towering rage.

"I—I—never was so insulted before in the whole course of my life!" she exclaimed. "That cabman's a thief—a highway robber! He has charged me sixpence too much; and as if that was not bad enough, the door of my own nephew and niece is shut in my face, and I am treated as if I was a beggar selling stay-laces."

"But, auntie dear, I am so glad to see you at last. It was a mistake on the part of our servant."

"Do I look like a beggar woman selling stay-laces?—that's what I want to know," exclaimed my aunt.

"Oh, aunt, dear," I said, "it was only that stupid girl."

"Then you shouldn't keep such creatures about you," said my aunt.

"That's what I tell her," said Alfred, in his cowardly way.

Aunt faced round at him directly, and serve him right.

"How dare you take me up like that, sir?" she cried. "Is that the way you speak to this poor lamb? I won't have it."

"But I was only—"

"Hold your tongue, sir, and go and get my lug-

gage upstairs. Mind this, sir—there are hospitals, and institutions, and charities, and schools, to which I can leave my money, and not a penny shall you ever touch if you are to behave like this! I see through you, sir. I know why I have been put off, and put off, and put off. It's you, is it? Oh, you monster! Why did I ever let you marry my poor girl here?"

I dare say it was cowardly of me now; but, whether or no, I did not say anything, and poor Alfred had to take his snubbing and go. Ah, how many times has he snubbed poor me!

Aunt Tatlock's first remark, as soon as she had had sherry and biscuits—both of which she said were atrocious, and she accused Alfred of getting rubbish because she was expected—Aunt Tatlock's first remark was that she was very glad that she had come, for she saw we wanted a deal of putting to rights, and she should set to at once.

She did!

Alfred, to use his own expression, curled up like a leaf—a nasty, shabby fellow!—and did nothing else but go to the Whifflers, saying that it was business; and I dared not tell Aunt Tatlock the truth. As for poor me, I resigned myself to my fate; for I told myself that, after all, perhaps it would be for the best if auntie could set us to rights in the matter of servants.

Ann was sent to the right-about directly; but not before she had called aunt "An ould baste," and left the room followed by one of my best vases, which happened to be standing on the table full of flowers, and which made a great mark on the door panel before it smashed itself upon the ground.

"And it'll be a warning to her, my dear," said auntie; "so now go and pick up the pieces."

I did it like a lamb, for I felt that the reins of government had gone for the present; and I said—

"Anything to be comfortably suited."

If it had been possible for anybody to be walked off their legs, I should have been walked off mine in going with aunt to registry offices, and getting characters. The letters I wrote to answer advertisements, and the money I spent in advertising, dear Alfred never knew—for not a shilling of her own money would auntie spend; and here are some of the results.

First, we had a girl who nearly drove us out of the house; for, to use dear Alfred's facetious way of putting it, the whole place savoured of the gentle green.

I don't know how she managed it, but there was the fact. We were obliged to have vegetables for dinner; and there was the smell coming up the balustrades, entering the dining-room, the drawing-room, lurking round the beds, and it grew so bad that Alfred used to say that he never washed but he felt as if he were using cabbage water.

"If that girl isn't sent away," said Aunt Tatlock, one day, "I shall go back into the country."

"Don't send her away," said Alfred, "and let the old dragon go."

But I had no choice, as aunt sent her away without consulting me. She only allowed me to pay her wages—that I was allowed to do without a murmur.

Next we had a very mild-looking maiden, who

used to get confused. The second day we had her, she was sent to the poultreter's for a pair of fowls to boil, and she did not come back. We sent Keziah to the poultreter, and he said that she had waited and taken away the fowls in her basket—that was all he knew.

There we were. We wanted the fowls for dinner, and we wanted Frances to cook them; but she had disappeared, and we could hear nothing of her. If she had had the money to pay for the fowls, I should have thought that she had decamped. If she had been handsome, I should have thought that some one had run away with her. But we ran an account at the poultreter's; and as to being handsome, Alfred stuffed his pocket handkerchief into his mouth as soon as he saw her, and looked at me; and I, knowing what he had said about my choosing ugly girls, felt the blood rush up into my face, which proves that blushing is not a sign of guilt.

Frances came back when we were canvassing the proposal of issuing a reward bill. When asked where she had been, she said that she had taken the wrong turning; and I suppose she must have gone on taking the wrong turning for five or six hours before she remembered where she lived, and found her way back with the chickens.

Frances, as I said before, used to grow confused. She never could wait at table at all; for when she took hold of a dish it used apparently to puzzle her, and she used to put it down again, then take it up and put it down somewhere else, and somewhere else would be anywhere—the sideboard, my work table, the chimney piece, in the coal-scuttle. There, I believe she would have set it in anybody's lap if she could have had a chance.

As I said before, she could not wait at table, little as we wanted done. Aunt only laughed when she poured the potatoes over dear Alfred's head; but when it came to a quantity of gravy down the nape of her neck she did not like it at all, and said if the girl ever did so again she should go.

The girl never did do so again, but she got into other muddles, and so had to go all the same; for let her be getting on very well, and then say a word to her, such as "Take that to your master," or "Hand that to Miss Tatlock," and the poor girl's nerve was gone completely, and she would set the plate perhaps on a chair while she hurried to give some one else vegetables, and before she had completed that task suddenly remember that she had left something outside.

Her weakness culminated in her bringing in the little, bright copper kettle one night; for we used not to use the urn without we had company, only have the bright kettle boiled downstairs, and then brought up to set on the hob.

Frances was bringing in the kettle one evening just as I was preparing by opening the tea caddy. Aunt was sitting back on one side, making wool anti-macassars, and, as usual after dinner, half asleep, as you could see by the way she dabbed at the stitches with the great wooden pins; and Alfred was leaning back in his chair, looking miserable, and evidently wishing himself at the Whifflers'. And, really, I don't wonder, poor boy; for it was very dull for him when Aunt Tatlock was there. For if

we made a little fuss over one another, she said it made her sick ; and she didn't like him to read, and she hated cards, and said chessmen were little demons.

Well, Frances had been rung for, and told to fetch the kettle—if she had had any brains she would have saved herself a journey—and she had come into the room with it hissing hot off the hot-plate, and holding it, silly girl, as if her fingers were all thumbs.

She had nearly got to the fireplace, and was passing auntie, who was leaning back in her easy-chair, and nodding, when Alfred said—

"Did the boy bring the *Echo* to-night, Frances?"

"*Echo*, sir?" said Frances, coming to a full stop, and looking confused.

"Yes, *Echo*," he said, peevishly.

But there, it all occurred almost in an instant. As he spoke to her, the silly creature held the kettle sideways, and began pouring the boiling water into Aunt Tatlock's lap. She screamed out horribly, of course, as anybody else would have done under the circumstances.

"Frances!" I exclaimed.

"Fool—idiot!" exclaimed Alfred, jumping up.

There, I never saw such a girl! She seemed frightened out of her wits ; and if she didn't plump the hot kettle into Aunt Tatlock's lap, and run out of the room back into the kitchen, where we found her afterwards, shivering with fear.

Aunt wasn't scalded much, but her dress was totally spoiled ; and in her rage she would have it that Alfred had planned it all on purpose to get rid of her, and she said that now she would stay all the longer.

"But this I am determined upon," said aunt—"she shall be packed off the very first thing to-morrow morning. Such conduct, indeed ! it's atrocious."

I was in agony—of course not from the scalding, because the hot water did not come near me—but for fear auntie should see Alfred ; for he was doing nothing else but make the most horrible contortions and grimaces.

I knew well enough what was the matter with him. He wanted to laugh, but he dared not ; and as often as a laugh formed and wanted to come he kept swallowing it again, and the consequence was that he kept on going "pob" and "pettle" quite softly in his chest, and getting black in the face ; so that at last I grew horribly frightened, and had such a spasm in my chest that I felt ready to cry.

Heigho! We got rid of Frances. I didn't dislike the girl, for she was ready to do anything for me, after her way ; but certainly she seemed to be possessed by a little demon, who was always prompting her to do it wrongly.

But, talk of being possessed by demons, you should have seen our new maid—such a fine, handsome, dark-eyed, ruddy-cheeked girl, that when Alfred looked at her, and then winked at me, and, in his teasing way, said she would do, I certainly did feel a little uncomfortable ; not, of course, that I had any cause, for I believe now that it was all nonsense about Miss Wilkins.

Auntie said we ought to be very grateful to her for getting such a girl ; but Alfred offended her by

saying that there was a screw loose somewhere, and auntie tossed her head, and said she did not understand slang.

Alfred was right, though, there was a screw loose, and very loose too, in our new maiden's moral perceptions.

I noticed it first when she had been with us about a week, though I afterwards thought I must have been wrong.

"Dinah," I said—for I would not have her called by her proper name, which was Diana—such stuff to christen a girl by such a name, moonshine Alfred said it was, though I didn't understand his allusion—"Dinah," I said, one evening, "who was that you were talking to at the front door?"

"Me, 'm—talking, 'm?" said Dinah.

"Yes," I said. "I am very particular about my servants keeping their places, and not making casual acquaintances."

"Please, 'm, I wasn't talking to no one, 'm."

"Didn't I see you talking to some strange man at the door just now?"

"Me, 'm?—no, 'm," said Dinah, so decidedly that I gave way ; for I thought I must have been mistaken.

But there, bless you ! that girl seemed to have no more idea of right and wrong than a baby. She would tell a lie with the most barefaced assumption of innocence possible, looking so injured the while, that often and often I've felt quite sorry for the girl, and told myself that it was too bad to be so suspicious. I even went so far as to take her part with Alfred when he accused her of telling him a falsehood, and made him so cross that he quite glowered at me, and sent me to my room in tears, by telling me I was in Co., as he called it, with the girl.

It was telling a fib to Aunt Tatlock that finished her—not that it was the first by a hundred or two ; but it was such a barefaced one that poor aunt could not put up with it. The girl, too, was growing impudent.

It was only a simple matter, about some eau de Cologne. Aunt said Dinah must have taken it out of her scent bottle, and Dinah said she had not, and began to cry, saying she was always being falsely accused ; when out she whipped her handkerchief, smelling strongly of the scent ; and it happened, too, that I had seen her take it, and she knew it.

So Dinah was sent away, and instead of setting about getting another, Aunt Tatlock declared that it was waste of time to try and suit us with servants, for we were never satisfied.

That's the way of the world. She went back into the country the very next day, as cross and huffy as could be, telling me that I had brought my pigs to a pretty market by marrying such a man as dear Woppy, and threatening to alter her will. While, though alone, we are not so very unhappy in her absence, for Keziah has gone, and we have just broken darling baby into going to sleep without any one alive to gurgle ; for Alfred is so clever and ingenious, and he manages to do it with a big stone bottle full of water—making it pour out, you know.

We've no servant at all, you know, now, and it's such fun ; only the doorstep looks so dirty. Alfred lights the fires, and I make the beds, wash baby,

and cook; but all the same, if any one who reads this can recommend a couple of good servants, will they send them to Mrs. Chignal, *nde* Rawley, 99, Acacia-villas, St. John's-wood, N.W.

N.B.—We're so happy.

N.N.B.—Clouds. Aunt writes to say her house has turned so damp through being left, and she's coming back.

N.N.N.B.—Alfred says—there, I declare I dare not tell you.

THE END.

The War Correspondent.

BY THE WANDERING JEW.

UNDER THE YASHMAK.

I DON'T want to be troublesome to you; but I am getting very uncomfortable in my clothes. They fit horribly; for I am getting quite a *squelette*, as the French call it. The heat is so great, that I am melting away fast, and have lost stones in weight since I came out.

For a few days I have been very quiet, not liking to show myself much, on account of that affair in the monitor. The Russians swear they will have my blood; but, really and truly, I believe that if I were pricked now not a drop would come, for it feels to me as if it were all dried up hard.

As for the Turks, they have been worshipping me. They won't believe anything about the tribe of Judah, but declare that I am of another kind of Eastern descent, and want to make out that I am a genuine Turk—a brother, in fact.

I have been made a pacha, and they want me to take a command in the army. I might be tempted to do so; but what will you do? I have undertaken to be your special correspondent, and I shall correspond.

Honestly, I believe that any position I like to take is open to me in the Turkish army, so great a respect have they for valour and dash.

But, fie, this is egotistical! Let me to my task of dealing with others.

The Russians completed the bridge they made, and have crossed in great numbers, horse, foot, and artillery; and now their Cossacks, like the Uhlans of the Prussian army, are trotting in all directions.

By the way, I like to be instructive, and give information. You know, of course, why the Russian light cavalry are so called. No? Then I'll tell you. It is from their costume. Cos-sack, or sacque. They wear a loose kind of coat, formed of a very coarse material obtained by the Russian Government from the island of Cos, in the Mediterranean—famous for its lettuces. This material is not made in the island, but is brought there by the currents from the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. It is in the shape of sacks when it reaches the island—sacks that have been thrown into the Straits for marital reasons. You know, of course, the origin of getting the sack? The Turkish wives who displease their husbands get the sack—that is to say, the naughty creatures are popped in a sack by the black eunuchs, and dropped from a caïque into the sea, when the current carries them to Cos. If you say why, I reply—Because it's a matter of Cos.

The Turkish wives don't mind—they rather like it. In fact, it is such an old custom that they are used to it; and as for the sacks, the Cosites empty them, dry them in the sun, supply the Russian Government, and now the blue bonnets are over the border—metaphorical—of course I mean the sacks have come over the Danube; and if the Turks get the best of it, the sacks can be used again.

Nice girls the Turkish, uncommonly; and now their husbands are all gone to the wars, they are terribly lovely, and leave off their yashmaks, just for the fun of the thing. Nice things those yashmaks; cover their faces up all but two peep-holes for their eyes, and very big and clear they look.

NOTE TO EDITOR.

That is the whole of my letter this week. It is short, but sweet and instructive. I could write no more for the press, as nothing particular has happened besides the crossing of the Danube, the retreat of Rublu and his men, and a few—a dozen or so—small skirmishes. And besides, as I told you, I have been obliged to keep very quiet, partly on account of the Russians, partly on account of the Turks. So you see this is all for your private eye; so don't let that Tom-fool idiot of a sub-editor of yours get hold of it and send it to press. He's just the man to do it, and make a muddle by exposing my secrets; just as he got pulling my former letters about, altering and improving them, as he calls it. Why, he cut all my best stories out of one paper, and I don't like it.

Now to private business.

The fact is, dear boy, I'm in a fix. I'm shut up in a confounded damp, dirty prison, and all through an adventure. They have taken away my hat and my boots, boned my watch, and collared my baggage. I don't know what I shall do, unless you write to old Nineveh Layard, at Constantinople, and make him insist upon my being set at liberty.

"What's the matter?" you'll say. And then, in your nasty, sardonic, snarling way, you'll say that there's a woman in the case.

I wish there was a woman in the case, instead of yours truly. By the case, I mean this wretched, contemptible prison, where I am guarded by a couple of regulars, who have lived so much amongst the Bashi-Bazouks that you could not tell them from the real thing.

Well, you are nearly right: it was not about a woman, but about women.

I'll tell you.

It was this. Rublu and I had pitched tent close to a charming little town, where there was a regular swell of a bey, who came and spent a good deal of time with us, but was precious mysterious about his house and belongings.

Slowmillah is the name of the place. You'll find it on the maps; and a very nice spot it is.

Well, Poka Bey was sitting drinking with us one evening, when I got up to go outside and smoke a cigar in the open.

Tempted by the beauty of the night, I walked into the town, and had not gone far—feeling, under those burning stars, how like the scene was to one in the Arabian Nights—when the likeness was aug-

mented by my meeting a sable slave, leading a donkey, upon which was riding a lady in the closest of yashmaks.

"An adventure!" I exclaimed; and as I did, the donkey reared its hind-quarters sharply and kicked.

I ran up, and seized the lady, who threw her arms round my neck, or she would certainly have been off.

I had, of course, thrown my arms round her waist, and, as I did so, the softness of the contact told me that these Eastern ladies ignore the Swanbill corset, the touch being as different as could be to that of ladies with whom I have waltzed in Western drawing-rooms.

Now, this being a strictly ethnological remark, you need not make comments thereon. To continue.

The lady clung to me wildly; the donkey brayed and kicked; I held her on like a man; and the black slave turned upon me, a torrent of vituperation playing upon me from his mouth as if it had been the branch of one of Captain Shaw's steam fire engines.

I did not know all he said; but I was Turkey enough to comprehend that he called me "giaour, dog, pariah, infidel," in addition to every Turkish abomination in their tongue. He looked perfectly demoniacal, with his black face and rolling opal eyeballs, and he declared that I had profaned the sanctity of a pacha's wife by touching.

All of which was saying that I ought to have stood still, let the donkey kick the lady off, and trample upon her.

I didn't see it, and the poor little woman did not see it; for she clung to me tightly, and, by accident of course, her ugly yashmak fell off, and disclosed to my gaze one of the most beautiful faces I ever saw, and—there, I must own it to you—I exclaimed—

"Oh!!!"

Before I go any farther, as I know how particular you are upon such matters, let me explain a little; for I am going to own that I fell desperately in love with this gazelle-eyed creature on the spot.

Mem.: all Eastern ladies are gazelle-eyed, and they like to be told so.

Now, with you I agree that at home it would have been highly improper and dreadful to fall in love with a married lady; but out here—

There, don't be impatient. Hear me out.

I say, out here, where I learned that this lady was the wife of a pacha—the old humbug, in fact, who been drinking and smoking with us—who had nine hundred wives, I considered mathematically that the evil-doing could not be more than one nine-hundredth part as bad; and again when the affection for the lady was purely platonic, the wickedness became so infinitesimal that really I do not think it counts at all, especially when the marriage ceremony was a barbarous Eastern one.

Well, sir, there I was, with the donkey kicking, the lady clinging to me, and babbling prayers from the prettiest of red lips to me that I would not let her go, and the savage black was calling me all the abominable epithets that he could lay his tongue to.

Finding, at last, that I would not let the lady fall

and bruise her pretty little nose on the hard stones of the badly paved street, he came at me, menacingly, with a diabolical-looking carving knife in his hand.

Mine were occupied, so what could I do? Be killed? No, thank you. As you say, in your contemptible office slang, not for Solomon!

I was at my wit's end—nearly at my life's—so what did I do?

The example was before me—the donkey. He kicked furiously, and I might have followed his example. But no, sir, I am of too manly a nature. I could not kick an enemy to save my life. Besides, this black dog was such a beast, it would have been defiling my boots. By the way, just tell Jenkins these boots are not up to the mark.

Suddenly an inspiration seized me.

"Hold tight, darling!" I exclaimed, taking one hand from the soft little waist, and seizing the donkey's bridle.

She screamed, but clung to my neck the tighter; and then, just as it was nearly all over with yours truly, from garotte of the neck and carving knife in the back, I slewed the donkey round so that he delivered a broadside of kicks—rip-rap—just where a Nubian slave's dinner would go after a hearty meal.

"Wough!" he exclaimed, mournfully.

"Hee-haw-aw-aw-aw!" cried the donkey.

And my enemy rolled over helplessly on the ground.

"Thanks—thanks, my brave preserver," cried the lady, turning upon me her lustrous, gazelleish eyes.

"Thy slave is but too glad to have been of service."

"I shall love you to the end of my days," she cried, clinging to me. "Pray, hold the donkey."

The first was pleasant, but the last was plain; for I could not help feeling like a donkey boy at Margate; but then, those eyes—oh, sir!

I recovered myself, and replied in Eastern fashion.

"May those days be long and sunshiny."

"Nay, say not so, oh, handsome stranger; for I love the moon, the garden of Gul and the nightingale's sweet song."

"It's all the same," I said, politely, and with great empressement, only I ought to have said nights instead of days.

"Know you the land where the cypress and myrtle?" exclaimed the lady, the words dropping from lips like pearls—the very words, by the way, that Byron wrote, by a kind of prophetic inspiration, years ago.

"I do," I exclaimed, rapturously. "Here we are again."

"Horoooh, horooho—beautiful, beautiful!" exclaimed the lady.

"Nay," I said, "it is the fair hours of the land that are beautiful."

"How you flatter, illustrious stranger!" she cried, as she coquettishly readjusted her yashmak.

"I never flatter," I said, gravely.

"Then will you see me safely home?"

"I will," I ejaculated.

And the donkey being pacified with a cigar, which he chewed with delight, I held the rein, and walked by the lady's side down the narrow, tortuous street, with the delicious stars winking to one another as if they enjoyed it all immensely.

I was so enraptured that I could scarcely speak, and the moments fled so rapidly that I could hardly believe it; when the donkey stopped of his own accord beneath a dark archway.

"Alas!" sighed the lady, "my tyrant's home."

"And you are married, then?"

"Alas, yes," she sighed; "but not much."

"Explain yourself," I said.

"I will," she replied, letting one fair hand rest upon my shoulder. "I am now nineteen."

"Most joyous of ages!" I exclaimed, enthusiastically.

I don't know why, but I did.

"I was married," she continued, "at the age of sixteen."

"Nineteen from sixteen," I muttered to myself, "you can't. Borrow ten. No, no; that's upside down. Sixteen from nineteen, and three remain. You were then married three years ago?"

"Yes," she exclaimed. "How clever you are!—three years ago next week. We never learn arithmetic in the harem."

"Shame!" I exclaimed. "Where is your school board?"

"Alas! I know not," she cried. "But let me tell you I have not seen my husband since, for I have only a vulgar fraction, one nine-hundredth, of his heart."

"Poor child!" I sighed; "but I see that your knowledge of figures is intuitive." Then to myself, "I wonder whether she admires mine."

"But I shall see him next week," she said, sadly.

"Poorer child!" I sighed again.

"You pity me, illustrious stranger," she said.

"I do," I cried, enthusiastically. "I was thinking of what would be my own lot had some tyrannous lady married nine hundred husbands and I was one."

"Ah, yes," she sighed. "It is hard, and the wives do quarrel so, and are so spiteful."

"Indeed, sweet creature, how?"

"They stick pins," she said, sadly. "I have been like a pincushion sometimes with hundreds of sharp points."

"Oh, this is dreadful!" I exclaimed.

"Very," she sighed—"especially when they go in right to the head. There is something to make it less painful, though," she continued; "one can always stick pins in turn into a new wife."

How those moments fled I know not; but I was roused to a state of our present position by the donkey suddenly placing his hoof on my left foot; and what with his weight, augmented by the lady's, I felt it was time to go.

"I must leave you," I sighed. "Would I could be your slave."

"Joyous idea!" she cried. "You are adventurous, by your bravery in saving me. Why not be my slave?"

"How?" I exclaimed.

"Quick," she cried, "I will wait. Go, fetch the Nubian's borrowed plumes."

I ran, and returned with his turban and robe. As for the slave, he was motionless.

"Excellent!" cried the lady. "Put them on."

I did, and then exclaimed—

"But my colour? I am white; he was black."

She laughed a little silvery laugh; and taking a bottle from a pocket in the donkey's saddle, she drew out the cork with a loud "sop!" and threw the bottle away.

"Have you one of those fire-balls with which the Franks light their pipes?"

"I have," I said.

"Give it to me."

I gave her a vesuvian and also a wax match; and, lighting first one and then the other, she well burned the end of the cork.

"Now come hither," she cried.

I came hither; and, with delicate fingers, she blackened my face, neck, and hands, singing softly to herself the while the beautiful song of Eastern virgins which became so popular with our youth of tender years—I mean the "Ten Little Niggers."

"There," she exclaimed at last, giving the finishing touches—"your own mother would not know you. Now, will you be my Nubian slave?"

"I will," I exclaimed, rapturously.

"You shall," she exclaimed. "Take the bridle, rap three times at the wicket, and say *attar*."

I did so; the gate opened, and, unquestioned, I passed into the pacha's harem—a cold chill going down my back as the gate closed; and then, with bowstrings and tongueless mutes dancing before my eyes, I crossed a beautiful garden, lit by wondrous lamps, while the tinkling fall of water sounded musically in my ears.

I'll tell you more in my next; but mind, now, no larks; this adventure of mine is not meant for publication.

Errors or Blunders.

ONE of the prominent barristers, lately deceased, was, while living, notably one of the worst writers in the United Kingdom. He wrote such a bad "fist," as the lawyers term it, that he could no more read his own writing than he could the hieroglyphics on an Egyptian pyramid. His copy would be sent to the printer's to have his speech printed, and curses loud and deep would then be lying around loose in that office.

The late lamented Horace Greeley was once sitting in his office when a boy handed him a letter. He opened it, and drew forth a note covered with what seemed to him to be the cabalistic signs on an alchemist's robe. He looked at the boy, and thundered—

"Go back and tell that fool to write so's I'll understand it."

"That's just what he told me to tell you—to write so he can understand it," replied the boy.

Horace looked at the letter in surprise—it was his own—there was his signature! It had been returned to him to rewrite it.

I have collected together a few amusing typographical errors; whether author or compositor was to blame in all cases I don't know, but I presume it would not be unfair to distribute "honour where honour is due," and allow it to fall, as Alexander

said, "on the shoulders of the one most worthy." Who that is in this case I leave the reader to imagine.

A graduating college student, using the words, "And, like great Caesar, die with decency," in his speech, was surprised to see it published, "And, like great Caesar, die with dysentery."

Tom Hood's world-famous "Song of the Shirt" was once published as the "Song of the Skirt."

As the morning papers say, "the following correspondence explains itself":—"At a recent fire in the Knickerbocker Company's ice-house, 20,000 tons of ice were reduced to ashes."

I read of a man who had "been digging with a Roman nose."

Here is one:—"Dr. Jones was called in to attend a man who had been injured by a street-car, and under his prompt and skilful treatment the man died on Wednesday night."

The following verdict of a coroner's jury was published:—"Deceased bore an accidental character, and the jury returned a verdict of excellent death."

One of my neighbours—a married lady—sent a note to a newspaper in this city to get a recipe to cure the whooping-cough in a pair of twins. By a deplorable mistake a recipe for pickling onions was unconsciously inserted, and her name attached, and she received this answer through the "Answers to Correspondents":—"Mrs. L. H. B.—If not too young, skin them pretty closely, immerse in scalding water, sprinkle plentifully with salt, and immerse them for a week in strong brine." She didn't do it, however, as she thought it would kill the cough nineteen times out of twenty, and the children nine times out of ten.

An article in a London paper said, "A young man, deserted and reduced to want, recently shot himself in the West-end." I have looked over four volumes on "Anatomy," and eight coloured charts of the human body, and have not up to date found where the West-end is, where the fatal bullet penetrated.

Another "exceeding strange" story:—"A man in Ohio was lately arrested for burning the barns and contents of his son-in-law." Whether the son-in-law lived after his barns and contents were burned does not transpire.

In one of our love-stories the passage occurred, "Mr. B—, won't you have some boiled chicken?" and the author was horrified to find it published, "Mr. B—, won't you have some boiled children?"

In a poem on "Death," an ambitious Tupperian exclaims—

"Rest calmly within a shroud,
With a weeping willow by my side."

It is a beautiful figure of speech, but when it is published "weeping widow" it doesn't improve it.

"Foemen in Buckram" was published "Four Men in a Back-room," and "Suburban Journalism Advancing" was changed to "Superb Jerusalem Artichokes." These two occurred to Horace Greeley, as did also the following. When the *Tribune* moved into the new building on Printing House-square, Horace sent up to the composing-room a notice, "Entrance on Spruce-street," to be printed, and then pasted on the front-door. After much profound cogitation, the foreman in despair finally set up and printed "Editor's on a Spree," and pasted it up.

A medical journal recently stated that "The case had been greatly aggravated by the ossification of warm poultices to the face," where "application" was intended.

The title of a new book reads, "A Treatise on the Steam-engine, with Theological Investigation on the Motive Power of Heat." Quite different from "Theoretical Investigation."

A new account of the battle of Kars:—"It was fearful to see. The men marched in pantaloons to their final account." The author probably meant "platoons."

There was a reward offered the other day for the recovery of "a large leather lady's travelling bag." Latest despatches incline to the belief that the large leather lady had not got it back.

A grocer in Washington advertises that he has "whiskey that has been drunk by all the Presidents, from General Jackson down to the present time."

An advertisement in a country paper says:—"Two sisters want washing. Apply —."

Another country advertisement:—"New-laid eggs by Betsey Briggs."

"Wanted, a young man to take care of horses of a Christian disposition."

A mendicant advertises himself:—"I beg for alms—I am blind—lost my eyesight four years ago—father of four children—result of an accident."

A hotel is advertised for sale, "kept by the widow of the late Mr. Brown, who died last summer on a new and improved plan."

A SPENDTHRIFT borrowed five shillings of a lady, and, of course, forgot to pay. After waiting several months, the lady dunned him for the money. "Pardon my neglect," said he; "the fact is, you yourself are the cause of your not being paid." "How so?" asked the lady. "Because," said he, "when I see you I forget all worldly matters—in short, I imagine myself in paradise!"

A PHYSICIAN, examining a student as to his progress, asked him, "Should a man fall into a well forty feet deep, and strike his head against one of the tools with which he had been digging, what would be your course if called in as a surgeon?" The student replied, "I should advise them to let the man lie, and fill up the well."

Fags and Fagging.

THE following notes are written by old boys who have had to pass through the fire of fagging at public schools:—

"I do not know if the system at Christ's Hospital has changed; but when I was there it was only a caning on the hand which was registered; and a master might flog a boy round the room with his cane (striking him about the body) without any but the class being the wiser. As to bullying at the hands of his monitors, we ought to have the evidence of his ward-fellows and particular companions.

"The system of fagging at Christ's Hospital is as follows:—Each Grecian, deputy Grecian, probationer, and monitor is allowed to have his fag, whom he is obliged to pay, and whose duty it is to clean his boots, make his bed, fetch his allowance from the buttery, and do his errands generally. Besides his pay, he gets such perquisites as the remains of his tea, a piece of cake, and the like.

"Between master and fag a good deal of licking generally exists; seldom, if ever, does the fag experience ill-treatment. I do not think a friendship of this kind would otherwise exist, as the monitor's position in the school would forbid his making a friend of a boy in its lower classes. I have been a fag myself, and can assure you that I enjoyed that part of my stay at Christ's Hospital very much, and was never ill-treated by my master.

"The idea of the monitor thrashing the boy for success in athletic sports is, I think, absurd, as these successes would give the ward a claim to the challenge cup of the school—a great distinction—and there could be no rivalry between a boy of twelve and one of fifteen years, as they would compete in different classes. The monitors have, I believe, no legal power to strike a boy; but there are numberless offences for which they cannot report him, so what are they to do? They cuff him, and fist him, and probably make him cry a little; but do him no positive injury. The fact is, however, that some of the boys who come to London have been monitors at Hertford, where they had the same power on a smaller scale, and so this ill-treatment affects them more than it would another. Then this boy had heard of the attempted suicide of the other, and this must have suggested the idea to him. In a moment of passion he probably placed the cord round his neck, perhaps not intending to do more, and then fell from the ledge and died.

"While I was at this school, a boy ran away three times, for no reason at all by his own account, and afterwards turned out a very steady fellow. I think his intention of making a complaint of a master merits quite as much inquiry as the bullying he received from his monitors.

"I have remembered a great difference in the manner in which punishment is administered in the Blue-coat School and another school with which I am acquainted. At Christ's Hospital each master keeps his own cane, and uses it as he likes, and registers the punishment or not; and at the end of the term the book is examined. At the other school the cane is kept by the secretary, and is sent for by the master when he wishes to punish a boy. The punishment

is registered in a book sent with the cane, and returned to the secretary after the punishment. Next day the boy is brought before the head-master, and the whole affair examined into, and the boy can make any complaint of injustice, &c., which he may have."

Another says:—"Although at first thought I might be surprised that, out of the many thousands whose young days were passed in the ancient foundation of Christ's Hospital, there is not one to take up the subject of school tyranny, yet that surprise vanishes when I feel how hard it is to say one word against the institution to which, for its teaching and training, I owe so much; but on reading the account of the untimely end of a Blue-coat boy, I cannot but take up my pen to expose (if it be necessary) the brutality practised within the walls of Christ's Hospital, and which I, until the present moment, had hoped no longer existed. The weak and friendless boy from Hertford becomes nothing less than the slave of the strong, grown-up lad. I have known of serious illness resulting from such ill-usage; in many instances, to my knowledge, the poor boys have fainted away from the pain. But bodily suffering is not the only grievance which the Hertford boy has to contend with; all his play hours are spent (under threat of a licking) to gratify the lad who reigns over him by the strength of his arm; and I regret to add that the Grecians, under the forgiving title of discipline, bully the lads who do not obey them in all things.

"If the matrons and doctors of the infirmary would make inquiries, they would find that the strained limbs and bruised body are not always the result of falls or natural feebleness. It is the duty of the warden and the masters to make full inquiries into this matter. From the boys themselves they will learn nothing; for who will peach? But I can assure them that, as long as they are willing to permit the boy to rule the boy, which no doubt takes from their own shoulders so much anxiety and trouble; as long as matrons view this bullying with smiles, because it tends so much towards obtaining order and quiet; as long as Grecians are allowed to use their study to cuff and lick their younger brothers without fear of exposure, so long will Christ's Hospital nourish the brutal tendency instead of the good and noble impulses of boyhood."

Another writer asks to be permitted to state from experience what he knows in regard to the power of bullying that was possessed by the monitors, and which he believes still exists, notwithstanding the efforts of Major Brackenbury to suppress it. He says:—

"I have often seen boys—as a rule, smaller than the monitor, on the principle that 'discretion is the better part of valour'—called out by a monitor for some trifling offence, ordered to put their hands behind them, and then beaten in a most brutal manner about the face and head, getting an extra dose if they raised their hands to protect themselves. The punishment, being always inflicted in the ward, never became known at head-quarters, the victim not daring to complain, for fear of incurring severer treatment. The Grecians, with few exceptions, used also to show off their strength by administering

savage thrashings; and on one occasion three of these renowned heroes, by using the head master's name, decoyed a boy—who had struck one of their fraternity in self-defence—to their private room, where two held him hand and foot, while the third disfigured his face with brutal blows. This is only one instance of their many 'brave deeds;' and if poor young Gibbs was subjected to anything like such treatment from the monitor, who would be surprised at his running away? The suggestion will at once occur to every one that the provocation must indeed have been great to have driven such a child to so desperate a remedy as self-destruction; and Mr. Sykes's letter refutes the assertion that his character was bad."

Another "Old Blue" writes:—

"It is now ten years since I was at the Blue-coat School, and from all I have heard of late years I had hoped that things were much better than when I was there, and so I still believe they are, though there is evidently yet room for amendment so far as the protection of the smaller boys goes. No doubt boys must expect to rough it when they go to a public school; but what is a timid, sensitive, and not over-strong boy to do if he is systematically 'bullied' by one or more of the bigger boys? On the one hand, he has not the pluck to rebel, and on the other hand he dreads being branded as a 'sneak' if he 'puns out'—as tale-telling is called. He can only complain to his people at home, and they naturally laugh it off, and tell him that he must expect that kind of thing at school. Poor young Gibbs's fate, however, must startle us all into the conviction that this is not a matter to be treated so lightly as it used to be, and I for one can thoroughly sympathize with the poor little chap; for the first three years of my life at Newgate-street were filled with the dread of meeting the bullies in my ward, who used to take every opportunity of knocking us about, and made us spend our play-hours as they dictated, and not in amusing ourselves as we pleased. I am convinced that the treatment to which I was subjected has given to my mind a melancholy turn which I shall never get rid of. You are ever ready to espouse a good cause, and I am sure that you could do no better service to school boys at large than by insisting that more care shall be taken that the brutal element in a school shall not be allowed to make the delicate or timid portion miserable during the time which is generally credited with being the happiest part of one's life."

"An Old Scholar" says:—

"I hold the school in veneration to this day, as one of the grandest institutions in the world, and all that is needed to develop it, and make it a place to be remembered in love and not in hate, is in the government, management, and treatment of the boys. The education and food are good. The clothing, especially the underclothing, was so harsh that we were afraid to wear the new shirts. But all this is of lesser importance; it is the management and teaching I desire to amend. With the exception of two masters—Dr. Rice, afterwards head-master, and Mr. Browne, a really good and pious man, but severe—there was not a master or under-master not thoroughly hated

by us all. Their treatment of us children was simply barbarous in its brutality, and was the more disgraceful to them as they were clergymen of the Church of England—so-called Christians. For the smallest offences it was cane or birch, and it was not until one boy had been flogged with extreme severity by one of these Christian clergymen—I avoid giving his name, as he afterwards became a popular preacher in a fashionable parish, and may be still, but I hope is not—that the power to flog was taken from the hands of these creatures, and remitted to the head-master alone, without whose sanction no boy could be birched; but the power of beating the hands and body was still left, not only to these clergymen, but to the writing masters, who used it mercilessly. The cause of the birch being taken from the hands of these pedagogues was this. I remember it well, and so will the victim, if he be alive, I will be bound. One of the under grammar masters, in a fit of anger, accused a whole class of being so bad that he wished to flog the whole; but this being inconvenient, he cast lots, and it fell on one whose parents afterwards complained to the treasurer. This boy was stripped to the loins, held fast to an iron post in the school, and flogged with unusual severity. The treasurer heard the complaint, and, it will hardly be credited, this clergyman was admonished, but not dismissed from the office of master. It, however, stopped the indiscriminate use of the birch. Mr. Drew was in error—three (not two) beadles were required to flog a child, one to hoist him with crossed arms on to his back, a second to hold his legs to restrain his struggles, and a third to lay it on with all his strength. I have witnessed this over and over again. Let the Court of Almoners, with his Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge at their head, set to work to improve the moral government and management of the school; take from the women nurses—who were all very common—the power of stopping the leave of the boys, and misrepresenting them to the steward; make the beadles and others treat the boys properly, and avoid constantly insulting them; and let the boys be taught that their word will be accepted, which was rarely done in opposition to beadle or nurse; and let gentlemen like the present Warden be entrusted with the social government of boys whose after-life depends on the training they receive in such an establishment. I shall be prepared to offer my evidence to the committee at the proper time; meanwhile, I hope you will not let the subject drop, as it is a disgrace that such an institution should be injured in the public estimation by bad management. In my days the masters knew nothing of us out of school, and cared less. The time has happily arrived, as I knew it would, for an alteration."

Again another:—

"As an old Blue, and one whose lot at Christ's Hospital was cast in far stormier times than the present, permit me to say a few words with regard to this sad incident. I would willingly have kept silent had it not been for the fact that I, too, when a youngster, was placed in precisely similar circumstances to what Gibbs was previous to his hanging himself. Now, I know from

experience what monitorial tyranny means, and therefore could quite understand the state of this boy's feelings toward his senior, especially if he was in any way subject to the personal dislikes of his youthful chastiser, for, in that case, the monitor would most probably treat him with greater severity. I think it most undesirable to allow boys of fifteen or sixteen to beat or punish at their discretion any junior lad who offends, because, in most cases, we should find this power abused. The infliction of corporal punishment lies clearly within the master's province, and ought never to be entrusted to any other but properly qualified persons. The recent occurrence cannot but give rise to grave doubts in the minds of all old scholars who venerate their ancient school, and desire to see its present position upheld, as to the expediency of still retaining the present system of monitorial supervision. It seems to me that by abolishing this arrangement both senior and junior boys would be benefited — the former, by saving him from the painful necessity of exposure, under peculiar circumstances like the existing one; and the latter would be spared the unenviable task of resorting to violent means for freeing himself from cuffs and blows. I have no doubt that under the able management of the head-master a satisfactory termination may be put to this tyrannous method of bullying; and I may also express the hope that a searching investigation may be regularly instituted for the future in each ward, for the purpose of preventing terrorism of any kind or nature whatsoever."

As this system of torture exists in all our public schools, the writers say justly that it is time a change took place. Much is said about not making boys milksops; but, surely, to learn to be the depressed slave of an older lad should not form part of a boy's education.

A True Story.

AT the time of "the great earthquake of '68," said Mr. Swiddler—William Swiddler, of Calaveras—I was at Arica, Peru. I have not a map by me, and am not certain that Arica is not in Chili, but it can't make much difference; there was earthquake all along there.

Sam Baxter was with me. I think we had gone from San Francisco to make a railway, or something.

On the morning of the 'quake, Sam and I had gone down to the beach to bathe. We had shed our boots and begun to moult, when there was a slight tremor of the earth, as if the elephant who supports it was pushing upwards, or lying down and getting up again. Next, the surges, which were flattening themselves upon the sand, and dragging away such small trifles as they could lay hold of, began racing out seaward, as if they had received a telegraphic despatch that somebody was not expected to live. This was needed, for we did not expect to live.

When the sea had receded entirely out of sight, we started after it; for, it will be remembered, we had come to bathe; and bathing without some kind of water is not refreshing in a hot climate. I have heard that bathing in asses' milk is invigorating,

but at that time I had had no dealings with other authors: I have had no dealings with them since.

For the first four or five miles the walking was very difficult, although the grade was tolerably steep. The ground was soft, there were tangled forests of seaweed, old rotting ships, rusty anchors, human skeletons, and a multitude of things to impede the pedestrian. The floundering sharks bit our legs as we toiled past them, and we were constantly slipping down upon the flat fish strewn about like orange-peel on the sidewalk. Sam, too, had stuffed his shirt-front with such a weight of Spanish doubloons from the wreck of an old galleon, that I had to help him across all the worst places. It was very dispiriting. Presently, away on the western horizon, I saw the sea coming back. It occurred to me then that I did not wish it to come back. A tidal wave is nearly always wet, and I was now a good way from home, with no means of making a fire.

The same was true of Sam, but he did not appear to think of it in that way. He stood quite still a moment, with his eyes fixed on the advancing line of water; then turned to me, saying, very earnestly—

"Tell you what, William; I never wanted a ship so bad, from the cradle to the grave. I would give m-o-r-e for a ship—more than for all the railways and turnpikes you could scare up. I'd give more than a hundred thousand million dollars. I would—I'd give all I'm worth, and all my Ophir shares, for—just—one—little—ship."

To show how lightly he could part with his wealth, he lifted his shirt out of his trousers, unbosoming himself of his doubloons, which tumbled about his feet, a golden storm.

By this time the tidal wave was upon us. Call that a wave! It was one solid green wall of water, higher than Niagara Falls, stretching as far as we could see to right and left, without a break in its towering front. It was by no means clear what we ought to do. The moving walls showed no projections by means of which the most daring climber could hope to reach the top. There was no ivy; there were no window-ledges. Stay!—there was the lightning-rod. No, there wasn't any lightning-rod. Of course not.

Looking despairingly upward, I made a tolerably good beginning at thinking of all the mean actions I had wrought in the flesh, when I saw projecting beyond the crest of the wave a ship's bowsprit, with a man sitting on it reading a newspaper. Thank fortune, we were saved! Falling upon our knees with tearful gratitude, we got up again and ran—ran as fast as we could, I suspect; for now the whole fore-part of the ship bulged through the wave directly above our heads, and might lose its balance any moment. If we had only brought along our umbrellas!

I shouted to the man on the bowsprit to drop us a line. He merely replied that his correspondence was already very onerous, and he hadn't any pen and ink.

Then I told him I wanted to get aboard. He said I would find one on the beach, about three

leagues to the south'ard, where the *Nancy Tucker* went ashore.

At these replies I was disheartened. It was not so much that the man withheld assistance as that he made puns. Presently, however, he folded the newspaper, put it carefully away in his pocket, went and got a line, and let it down to us, just as we were about to give up the race. Sam made a lunge at it, and got it. I laid hold of his legs, the end of the rope was passed about the capstan, and as soon as the men on board had had a little grog, we were hauled up. I can assure you that it was no fine experience to go up in that way, close to the smooth vertical front of water, with the whales tumbling out all round and above us, and the sword-fishes nosing us pointedly with vulgar curiosity.

We had no sooner set foot on deck, and got Sam disengaged from the hook, than the purser stepped up with book and pencil.

"Tickets, gentlemen."

We told him we hadn't got any tickets, and he ordered us to be set ashore in a boat. It was represented to him that this was impossible under the circumstances; but he replied that he had nothing to do with circumstances. Nothing would move him till the captain, who was really a kind-hearted man, came on deck, and knocked him overboard. We were now stripped of our clothing, chafed all over with stiff brushes, rolled on our stomachs, wrapped in flannels, laid before a hot stove in the saloon, and strangled with scalding brandy. We had not been wet, nor had we swallowed any sea-water; but the surgeon said this was the proper treatment. I suspect, poor man, he did not often get the opportunity to resuscitate anybody; in fact, he admitted he had not had any such case as ours for years. It is uncertain what he might have done to us, if the tender-hearted captain had not thrashed him into his cabin, and told us to go on deck.

By this time the ship was passing above the town of Arica, and we were about to go astern and fish a little, when she grounded on a hill-top. The captain hove out all the anchors he had about him; and when the water went swirling back to its legal level, taking the town along for company, there we were, in the midst of a charming agricultural country, but at some distance from any seaport.

At sunrise next morning we were all on deck. Sam sauntered aft to the binnacle, cast his eye carelessly upon the compass, and uttered an ejaculation of astonishment.

"Tell you, captain," he called out, "this has been a direr convulsion of nature than you have any idea. Everythin's been screwed right round. Needle points due south!"

"Why, you lubber!" growled the skipper, moving up and taking a look, "it p'ints d'rectly to labbard, an' there's the sun dead ahead!"

Sam turned and confronted him with a steady gaze of ineffable contempt.

"Now, who said it wasn't dead ahead?—tell me that. Shows how much you know about earthquakes. 'Course, I didn't mean just this continent, nor just this earth; I tell you, the whole thing's turned!"

A Box of Water.

"WELL, John, what is it?"

"Box, by carrier, sir. One and four to pay."

"One and fourpence, eh? There, take it."

John, Mr. Octavius Roller's new footman, took out the afore-mentioned sum, and ran to the carrier, and then followed his master into the hall of his pretty country villa, one which he had built himself, "out of my own savings, sir," as he used to say. And a very pretty place it was; with ample lawn and shrubbery, splendid kitchen garden, where Mr. Octavius spent his moist summer evenings putting salt on the tails of slugs and snails out of a small jar. Then there were stabling, cowhouse, piggery, dairy, many acres of field and wood, and a pretty little lane through which ran a stream.

For Mr. Octavius was warm. They used to say in the City, before he retired from business, that he was very warm, and would cut up fat.

At any rate, he had a very cosy little place in Hertfordshire, where he lived with his maiden daughter, Mary—both finding themselves rather bored with their new life; while Mr. Octavius often sighed as he read trade reports in the paper about the firmness of tallow, the large business done in hams and Cork butter; and at such times he would ask himself whether retiring from business was not a mistake.

On entering the hall, there was the box—a flat, shallow box, about a foot long, and very heavy and thick.

"Well, John, what is it?" said Mr. Octavius.

"Dunno, sir. Seems to me like a box o' water," said John.

"A box of grandmothers!" exclaimed Mr. Octavius. "What are you talking about? Here, let me look."

"Octavius Roller, Esq., Dingle Mead, Hatfield, Herts," he read on the card. Then, "With great care. Perishable."

"It all goes wishy-washy, sir," said John. "Jest you try."

Mr. Octavius lifted up one end of the box, and certainly there was the sound of fluid within, which supported to some extent his man John's remarks.

"Perishable!" said Mr. Octavius, reading the directions again, and then smacking his lips. "John," he continued, "I am not an epicure, John, but it strikes me that box contains something to eat."

"Begging your pardon, sir; I should say, from its washy nature, as it was something to drink."

"Get the hammer and chisel, John, and let's open it, whether or no," said Mr. Octavius. "Well, block-head, what are you waiting about?"

"Well, sir," said John, hesitating, "I was thinking, sir—thinking."

"Thinking what?"

"As it might be dangerous."

"Dangerous, you great oaf! How could it be dangerous?"

"Somebody might have sent you a torpedo, sir, out of spite."

Mr. Octavius paused for a moment, as if struck by the remark.

"Stuff!" he exclaimed, directly—"stuff! nobody wants to spite me. Fetch the hammer and chisel."

"Yes, sir."

John departed, and as soon as he was gone Mr. Octavius gently shook the box, to hear the same washing noise within.

"It might be dangerous—some kind of spirit, or—bah! I know it's some bottles of something, and one's been broken. Now, it said 'with care,' and if I don't make that carrier pay for it, my name's not—"

"Hammer and chisel, sir," said John, re-entering the hall.

"You must be a fool, John," exclaimed Mr. Octavius, testily. "Don't you see the lid's screwed down. What's the use of a chisel?"

"Please, sir, you told me to—"

"Go and fetch a screwdriver, booby!" cried his master, angrily.

John went out, making a grimace at his master as he passed through the door, and returned with a screwdriver, which, on being applied in due course to the eight screws which held down the lid, the box was opened, and proved to be lined with thin sheet lead, in which floated about a quart of round objects like magnified shot.

"Humph!" ejaculated Mr. Octavius, who strongly objected to being considered ignorant. "Those are a kind of foreign pea. Oh, Mary! Look here, my dear; some one has sent us a box of a choice vegetable!"

"Why, they are peas, par," said Miss Roller, who now entered the hall.

"Well, my dear, peas are vegetables, are they not? I wonder who sent them. Take them to the cook, John, and say we will have them for dinner."

All doubts as to the sender were set at rest at the midday post; for a letter came from a young City friend.

"Humph! Yes, might have known it, my dear," said Mr. Octavius. "Juddly sent them. Um—um—um—very choice—um—um—um—hardly any in the market—um—um—um—in cold water—um—um—um."

"How long are they to boil, par?" said Miss Mary.

"Don't say, my dear. Till they are done, of course. Ring the bell."

John responded.

"Tell cook she's to put those peas in cold water, and keep them gently simmering till they are done."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Octavius resumed his letter :

"Coming down shortly, and if I can I'll bring you some more."

"Very kind of him, very," said Mr. Octavius. "But I say, Polly, I see what it means, eh? Don't tell me; I know a thing or two. Juddly's on. Well, I won't say no, if he pops; for he's a good fellow, Juddly, only just a morsel vulgar."

"I'm sure he's not, par," said Miss Mary, with a toss of the head.

"Poof!" ejaculated Mr. Octavius, bursting into an explosion of laughter. "That's it, is it?"

And Miss Mary sailed indignantly from the room.

The peas were cooked and eaten, and were not bad; so Mr. Octavius said—he liked marrowfats better,

though, as being less sticky; and in due course Mr. Juddly presented himself, to be most graciously received by papa and Miss Mary.

After dinner that evening, they strolled through the grounds, and down by the little lake, Mr. Octavius, who would not see how much he was in the way, keeping close to the young couple, and sticking to them like a burr.

"By the way," said Juddly, at last, in despair of having a quiet talk with his inamorata, "how do the trout get on?"

"Trout? No trout," said Mr. Octavius. "Swarms of roach and dace, and a few perch; but no trout."

"But of course there will be now?"

"Let's hope so," said Mr. Octavius.

And they walked on.

"By the way, par," said Miss Mary, suddenly, "you never thanked Mr. Juddly for the peas."

"No, of course not," said Mr. Octavius. "Very much obliged to you, dear boy. They were wonderful. Polly there had four helps."

"For shame, par!" cried the young lady, indignantly. "I only had two."

"Four," cried Mr. Octavius, chuckling. "I'll stick to four. But there, don't be ashamed, my dear. A girl who hasn't got a good appetite is not worth a dump. Very much obliged to you, though, Juddly. Did you bring any more?"

"For shame, par!" said Miss Mary, who then directed a languishing look at her lover.

"Any more what, sir?" said Juddly, staring.

"Peas, my boy, peas. We ordered the cook to put them on in cold water, as you said in your instructions; and really they were a very great delicacy. Weren't they, Polly?"

"But I never sent you any peas, sir," said Juddly, aghast, when he was not puzzled.

"Yes you did, my boy; a fortnight ago. Box of water—letter—you know. Why, you dog," he continued, punching Juddly in the ribs, "you're in love, and don't know what you are talking about."

"For shame, par!" cried Miss Mary, blushing.

"I'm in love, sir, certainly," said Juddly, glancing at Miss Mary, who cast down her eyes and sighed; "but I do know what I'm talking about. Do you mean to say, sir, that you ate those—those—that I sent you down?"

"To be sure I did, and so did Mary. You said they were foreign peas."

"That I did not, sir," said Juddly, stoutly.

"Now, Juddly, if you've poisoned me with your confounded tricks, sir, I'll never forgive you while I live; and when I die I'll haunt you."

"Oh, par, par!—pray, par, don't!" cried Miss Mary, in anguished tones; and then, turning to her cavalier, "Oh, James, what have you done?"

"Done?" cried Juddly, excitedly, "nothing wrong. Your father, here, was wishing for trout in the lake, and I sent him ten pounds' worth of trout spawn."

"And we cooked and ate it," sobbed Miss Mary.

Mr. Octavius slapped his leg, and exclaimed—

"I'm blest!"

An old omnibus conductor says he is no judge of female beauty, but he can always tell when the ladies are "passing fare."

Hydraulic Practical Jokes.

WHEN Catherine II. and her successors amused themselves at Peterhoff, the water-power was taken into service to play practical jokes on the unwary people, which cannot be called enjoyable.

In one retired nook there stands a gigantic mushroom, large enough to have a bench around its stem. As soon as anybody undertakes to seat himself upon it, the water streams out of the whole periphery of the spreading top, enclosing the captive in a splashing cylinder. To rise again stops the flow of water, but people have not always the presence of mind to think that.

In another secluded spot there is what is called the "Lovers' Seat," and here I came upon a poor boy in rather a disagreeable plight. Under a spreading elm, the branches of which are artfully interwoven with water pipes, there stands a bench, just wide enough for two, with a bed of flowers in front, containing some artificial and some natural shrubs, and two huge cast-iron thistles.

Some fun-loving individuals had enticed the boy to sit down there, and turned on the water, which was pouring over him in all directions, from the branches of the elm, the back of the bench, and from every branch and thorn of the shrubs. It must be an ardent lover, indeed, that would survive such a dousing.

In the boy's case there was no tender flame to overcome, and he bounced from his seat with a yell, and fled across the park, his cow-hide boots causing sad havoc among the flower-beds, while his dripping garments secured him plenty of elbow-room wherever he struck a gaily dressed crowd.

The Egotist's Note-book.

A"POOR blind man" who sought to excite the sympathies of the good people of Stranraer, on being taken into custody was found to have unimpaired eyesight. The discovery of his deception so preyed on his mind that he hung himself in his cell.

One of the happiest thoughts I know of in connection with obtaining funds for a church restoration has struck the churchwardens of the parish church of Hythe. Many years ago, there were discovered in the neighbourhood of the church a large collection of skulls. They were piled up under the tower, and by exhibiting them successive sextons made a handsome income. It being found necessary to restore the church, and money coming in too slowly, it occurred to some one in authority to turn an honest penny by the skulls of our forefathers. The skulls were accordingly appropriated in the name of the church, were neatly arranged in a grinning heap, and a regular tariff of payment was established, at which visitors might view the ghastly collection. The experiment has proved highly successful, and in the course of a few years the debt incurred by the restoration will be paid off. A useful measure of mystery hangs over the original proprietorship of the skulls. A local tradition, set forth in a neat specimen of caligraphy, framed and hung up by the skulls, states that they were originally

the property of an expeditionary force of Danes, who in the ninth century landed on the coast by Hythe, and were satisfactorily slaughtered. According to the primitive fashion of those days, the bodies appear to have been left lying on the beach till nothing remained of them but bones, which were subsequently collected and buried in the neighbourhood of the churchyard. And now, they are silently and effectually aiding in the good work of restoring the building that has so long afforded them shelter. Admission sixpence each; parties of three, one shilling.

One Sunday evening a man considerably more than half drunk presented himself at the police station.

Official: "Well, what do you want?"

Inebriate: "I want to be locked up."

Official: "Why?"

Inebriate: "Oh, I get drunk every Sunday, and am locked up at night; but to-night I couldn't find any officer to take me up, so I thought I would come myself."

The sergeant reflects a moment, and then replies, sententiously—

"If you are able to find the road to the police station by yourself, you are not drunk enough to be locked up. Come back in an hour or so."

A few days ago an American lady, staying at a fashionable lodging-house, was struck with the bed-quilt mania. She determined to manufacture a bed-quilt for some of the church fairs, to be composed of 6,843 pieces, irrespective of the edging. Full of this sublime feminine conception, she gathered up all the old calico rags that her neighbours were glad to get rid of, and spent a whole day cutting them into pieces; then about five o'clock she went out to dine.

When she returned the rags were gone. The way that woman fretted and worried about those pieces of patchwork was especially enlivening to the roomers on the same floor. She went to see the chief of police, called on the mayor, all the aldermen, and bored the head of the fire department almost to death to get some kind of redress. She wanted every room in the house searched.

Yesterday afternoon her Chinese wash-boy appeared with a big bundle, which he proceeded to deposit on the floor.

"How muchee, John?"

"Eighty-seven dollar and sixteen bittee."

A shiver went through that woman's frame.

The Chinaman unfolded the washing, and there were those 6,843 pieces of patchwork, and 3,689 ragged edges which had been cut off, all neatly washed, ironed, and folded.

Who is the weak-minded individual who still persists in placing this advertisement in the agony columns of our newspapers?

"To the people of God in the final Babylon, that is in this great city, London. Awake! mark well (Rev. xviii., verse 4; Jer. li., verse 6), and other prophecy regarding her. Her cup is nearly full."

Without being pharisaical, and with all poor London's failings, where on the face of this earth will you find a better-ordered, safer, healthier, and purer-

minded place ; or one where there is more religious and secular instruction, or finer charitable institutions of every kind ? No doubt we are a very wicked set of people, but it is dangerous work this trying to fit ancient prophecies on modern cities. Even the great Cumming was not infallible.

Many a poor physician has obtained a real patient by riding after an imaginary one. A quire of blank paper, tied with red tape, carried under a lawyer's arm, may procure him his first case, and make his fortune. Such is the world : "To him that hath shall be given." Quit dreaming and complaining ; keep busy and mind your chances.

The other day one of the clerks at a great railway station found the porter among the boxes, with pen, ink, and paper before him.

"Writing a letter, eh?" queried the clerk.

"Yes; writing to the old man."

He handed up the half-written letter for inspection, and presently the clerk remarked :

"I see you spell jug 'g-u-g'—that isn't right."

"Of course not," replied the porter ; "but you see I am writing to the old man, and he always spells that way. If I put the other 'g' to it, he would think I was putting on style, and forgetting that I was his son. He's good-hearted, and I don't want to hurt his feelings."

The letter went off with only one "g" at the end of "gug."

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1st PACKETS, 6^d 1/- 1/6. &
2nd TINS.

Goodall's Baking Powder
THE BEST IN THE WORLD.

BOTTLES 6^d 1/- & 2/- EACH.

Yorkshire Relish
THE MOST DELICIOUS SAUCE IN THE WORLD.

BOTTLES 1/- 1/2. 2/- & 2/3.
EACH

Goodall's Quinine Wine
THE BEST TONIC YET INTRODUCED.

6^d 1/- 2/- 3/- 6^d - 15/- & 28/-
TINS

Dr. Hassall's Food FOR INFANTS CHILDREN & INVALIDS
SEE TREATISE BY DR. ARTHUR HILL HASSALL M.D.

SOLD BY GROCERS, CHEMISTS, OILMEN &c.

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A word as to Brighton. The casual wards of that town are equal to the best in the metropolis, and a plentiful supply of bread and gruel is allowed. The great hardship here, as well as in casual wards everywhere, is the being detained till eleven o'clock. Under such circumstances casuals have no opportunity of looking after employment, but must hasten on to the next workhouse. It would be a great boon to the industrious, whilst it would be a punishment to the lazy, if casuals were set at liberty at six o'clock in the morning.

Young man, pay attention ! don't be a loafer—don't keep loafers' company—don't hang about loafing-places. Better work than sit idle day after day, or stand about corners with your hands in your pockets—better for your own health and prospects. Bustle about, if you mean to have anything to bustle about for.

A woman went up to a fish-stall, and after looking over it, said—

"How much for this plaice?"

"Fifteenpence."

The woman examined the fish again, and then exclaimed—

"Why, it isn't fresh!"

"I say it is fresh."

"Come and look at it, then."

"Go on," cried the dealer—"insult it as much as you like ; it can't answer you back again."

An Oxford candidate who was aware that his poetical abilities were not of a high order confided to his friends that his main hope of success lay in the masterly way in which he had managed to rhymingly introduce the unmanageable words which struck such terror into the successor of Nebuchadnezzar. After describing in eloquent words the feast, and the hush which fell upon the palace when the handwriting was seen upon the wall, and the wise men could not interpret it, the poet proceeded—

"When at these words the wise-men look'd appal'd,
Some one suggested Daniel should be called ;
Daniel was call'd, and just remarked—in passing—
'O Mene, mene, tekel, and upharsin.'"

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others ; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

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The Sergeant's Sacrifice.

WE marched out of Fort Phil Kearney two hundred strong—one hundred infantry, sixty cavalry, and forty teamsters. A body of Blackfoot Indians, nearly three hundred lodges in all, had been heard of on the plains, upon the other side of the ranges, where they had destroyed a camp, killed fourteen men, and taken several prisoners. These men were known to be well led, and their character for ferocity and courage was well known.

Their chief, Black Buffalo, had been subjected to some indignity at Fort Kearney, and in a quarrel with a subaltern had been struck in the face. Only the interposition of several bystanders had saved the sergeant from falling a victim to the rage of the chief, who, shaking his hand in a threatening manner at the man who had insulted him, called his men and horses together, and rode away. Sergeant Gifford had been severely reprimanded for so incensing the chief; and when the word came in that the savages were upon the war-path, with Black Buffalo at their head, the sergeant asked leave to join the forces sent out against them.

Sergeant Gifford was the model of a soldier—tall and strong, with a cool head, a keen eye, and an expression of complete bravery upon his whole face, which was indeed the character of the man.

"You will understand, sergeant, that it will not do for you to fall into the hands of Black Buffalo," said the commandant.

"I know it, major," he replied. "But, as I am in part to blame for this trouble, I ought to take a share in the danger."

"As you will, sergeant. But remember that our officers are not all Indian fighters, and your advice will be listened to by Captain Seely and Lieutenant Forbes."

"Are they to lead us?"

"Why not?"

"I am only a subaltern, major; but would it not be better to let Captain Mack and Lieutenant Frazer take the lead?"

"They follow about two hours after you, and will be in the fight. You will see that the teamsters receive their arms; for I depend upon them in a great measure, knowing that they are experienced Indian fighters."

So we marched out and crossed the ranges to the plain beyond, and halted for the large force under Captain Mack to come up. The teamsters had done their work, and the mules and horses were picketed upon the short prairie grass, which they were cropping eagerly; and the men, grouped about in a circle, drank their cold coffee—for they were not allowed to make fires—and laughed about what they would do if the Indians dared assail them. Most of the regulars had seen service, and, in fact, despised the enemy they expected to encounter; but they did not know them. We, the teamsters and guides, knew that Black Buffalo was not the man to be played with; and I was deputed by the rest to ask an interview with Captain Seely, and beg of him to take measures against a surprise. The captain was seated upon a camp-stool, which he had put into the ambulance, and was eating a luxurious meal, as it had

been cooked by the Frenchman who acted as cook for the mess. I did not like the captain much, for he was one of those men who refuse to listen to reason, and who know of no change once having decided upon a course, however wrong-headed it may be—an obstinate, pig-headed man, who would resent as an insult anything like advice; and the lieutenant, saving his presence, was a fool, and toady to the captain.

I was waggon-master of the train, and, as such, had a sort of licence to speak.

"Well, Thompson," said the captain, with a supercilious smile, "anything I can do for you?"

"I wanted to speak to you about these Indians," I said. "You see that we are camped in a hollow, and the savages can creep upon us to within a hundred yards, keeping behind the ridges. Might I suggest that it would be well to post pickets upon the ridges, with their horses near them, so as to guard against surprise?"

"Aw—yes. May I ask what your position in this command may be, sir?" he said, in his affected, drawling voice.

"I am only waggon-master, to be sure, and had no wish to offend; but—"

"You are not a colonel, I suppose?"

I rose and prepared to leave him.

"Not even a major," said Forbes, with a sickly smile.

"Pon my word, Thompson," said the captain, "I'll give you a little advice. Never presume to tell a military man how to command troops. It's out of your line, you know."

"But Sergeant Gifford thinks—"

"Sergeant Gifford is, unhappily, a subaltern, and, although a very useful man in his line of duty, hardly the one to dictate to us what we ought to do."

I left them hurriedly, and found the sergeant, who was lying upon the grass, his face buried in his hands.

"We ought to fall back on the main body, Thompson; and I would give all I am worth if the officers would take it into their heads to do it. But I am afraid they will not listen to us."

"I have tried them," I said, bitterly; "and they only insulted me."

"How was that?"

I told him about my interview with the officers, and the manner in which I had been received.

"I might have known it. How many braves do you suppose Black Buffalo can muster?"

"Five hundred, at least; and they are the picked men of his nation."

"We shall have some trouble, then. See to your weapons, and have your mule where you can get at him; and be careful that your picket-pins are well driven in. We can't stand a stampede."

The night came on. About eleven o'clock the moon rose in a clear sky, and I began to think my fears were not well-grounded, and at last wrapped myself in a blanket, and lay down. How long I slept I do not know; but I woke to find our party encircled on every side by a host of painted demons, their spear-heads gleaming in the moonlight, and their waving plumes dancing about in wild confusion; while the crack of rifles, the yells of savage

vengeance, the sharp whistling of feathered shafts, and the groans of the wounded, combined to make an earthly pandemonium. High and wild, above all the rest, rose the war-cry of Black Buffalo, as, mounted on a mustang of great size, his knees gripping his Mexican saddle, his bridle-rein dangling free, and his hand grasping his rifle, he sent shot after shot into our ranks, dashing away after each discharge. The circle grew narrower, and they made us pass a fearful time, until, out of our whole force, but eighty remained alive. The horses were safe as yet, and the sergeant approached the captain.

"This is no time for ceremony, captain. Our only hope of escaping alive is in the saddle; and there are horses enough for all. Bid them mount, and let us break through this band, and retreat to the main body. It is barely ten miles away."

"Give the order, sergeant!" cried the captain, faintly.

The men sprang for the horses at the word; and the Indians were appalled by the vision of eighty of the indomitable Anglo-Saxon race, a revolver in either hand, and the wild thirst for vengeance upon their faces, bearing down upon them. The coward was a brave man then; and, like a torrent which sweeps the mountain-side, we burst upon the painted foe, scattering them like chaff.

As we pulled up, I saw behind me a sight which I shall remember to my dying day. Captain Seely's horse had been shot from under him, and he was clinging to the pommel of Sergeant Gifford's saddle, crying to him for aid. Close upon them rode the red foe, their eyes glaring with the ardour of battle; and, foremost of all, the redoubtable chief, with a spear in his hand. Gifford saw that both could not be saved; and swinging himself out of the saddle, he caught the captain by the waist, and lifted him to his place, plunging the point of his knife into the flank of the horse, which bounded away like the wind, bearing the terrified coward in safety to our ranks, and leaving that brave, self-immolated man faced by five hundred enemies. I saw Black Buffalo raise his spear, with the grin of a demon on his face, and the next moment its keen point had pierced the sergeant through the lungs. But, writhing up against the spear, he fired one shot; and the grim chief, with that look of hatred frozen on his face, fell from his saddle beside the man he had slain.

I looked once at the men behind me, and read the resolve upon their faces; and we charged together. We knew that it was desperate, but we did it. As the revolvers began to crack, and the desperate fray began, we heard a shout; and saw a hundred dragoons, from Mack's detachment, bearing down upon their flank, their sabres flashing in the moon-rays.

Long after, the trappers told at their camp fires the story of the fearful fray, where not ten out of that great band of Indians escaped to tell the tale. We found the faithful sergeant, pierced by his enemy's spear, lying on the gory sod; and close beside him the famous chief, shot through the heart.

THIS American Rochefoucault says, "There are various stations in life, but the least desirable is a police station."

A Novel Mode of Catching Whales.

AN enterprising Norwegian, Mr. Sven Föyn, has successfully carried out a method of whale-fishing which has greatly added to the prosperity and the stench of Vadsö. He has two steamers, with hull, masts, and all other visible parts painted sea-green, in order that they may approach their victim unperceived. They are armed with small swivel guns, weighing about three hundred weight, at the bow. From these is fired a compound projectile, consisting of a harpoon with hinged barbs, or rather flukes, like those of an anchor, and weighing altogether about thirty pounds.

While the harpoon is in the gun, going through the air, and piercing its victim, these arms, or barbs, or flukes, lie snugly down by the side of the harpoon shaft; but when it has penetrated the flesh of the whale, and the shaft is drawn backwards, they spread out, pierce the flesh sideways and obliquely, till, at an angle of about 45 degrees, the stop of the hinge checks their further outspredding, and they become an effectual barb, which renders the withdrawal of the harpoon impossible.

But this is not all. Besides this formidable hinged barb, the harpoon is furnished with a humanely devised explosive shell, which bursts within the solid flesh of the sea monster, and kills him almost instantaneously. A towing cable is then fixed to his capacious nose, and the little bright green steamer tugs the great slate-coloured carcase into the Vadsö harbour.

A South American Adventure.

WE started in April, amidst the most dismal forebodings, the friends of the men I took with me taking a farewell as though they never expected to see them again. Three of the men travelled on foot, including an Indian, who carried his bows and arrows. The distance was thirty-two miles to the mouth of the Rio Sapao. Here there is a collection of seven or eight houses called Sta. Maria. It being on the Indian frontier, they are fortified after a rude fashion, as this place has been the scene of many a fight with the Indians.

We safely passed the mouth of the Rio Sapao, by swimming the animals and passing the baggage in a canoe, and then proceeded on our journey by the south-western side of the river. The Rio Sapao is a very deep, narrow stream, flowing sluggishly through marshy land, too narrow to be of any service as a navigable stream. Its banks throughout are densely lined with magnificent belts of forests, or thick groves of the buriti palms. The low, undulating lands on each side, extending from two to five miles away from the river, are covered with vegetation of ground palms, small bushes, stunted trees, and coarse grass.

Sometimes many miles were covered principally with the extraordinary-looking *canella d'elma* (*Vellozia*), with its beautiful lily-like flowers. Beyond these lowlands the land suddenly rises up almost perpendicularly, and becomes a vast arid table-land, but abounding in most of the kinds of game found in Brazil, such as *porco do matto*, a

true wild boar, rarely found anywhere else, and not to be confounded with the caeté or peccary; deer of several kinds—the galheiro and the campeira, the buck and doe of the Campos, and the stately sussu-apara, the largest deer in Brazil, but whose flesh is not eatable. There is also the ounce or jaguar, the sucurana (puma), the black ounce, and the guará; and near the river we saw numerous tracks of capivara (water-hog), pacas, and tapirs in extraordinary number.

Red and blue, red and gold, and purple macaws, and green parrots, continuously flew by us, making the hill-sides echo with their discordant screeches.

The Peruvian plant, commonly known amongst the people as *quellusaca*, is a magnificent object in regions that are of the wildest. Its leaves are thick, fleshy, and massive; their edges serrated, and armed with stout spines; while the central spike of gorgeous pinky flowers affords a sight once seen never to be forgotten. These plants are perfect giants amongst their kind; and from them the Indians distil a potent spirit, while the leaves, beaten out and dried, supply material from which some of their coarse fabrics are woven.

The weather was glorious, and I never breathed a more exhilarating atmosphere. We travelled by the foot of the slopes of the table-land. One night the animals suffered fearfully from vampire bats, and some of the men were bitten. The animals presented a ghastly appearance; on one I counted seven punctures.

The pedestrians had to keep a sharp look-out for the *cabeça de frade*, a curious ground-cactus, growing to about one foot in diameter, and only an inch or so above the surface of the ground; it is covered with long sharp spines, which cause a fearful wound to any unhappy person who treads on them. Every night the whole conversation turned upon the wild boars, and the men seemed to dread a visit from them more than from the Indians. Though I had seen a few tracks of them, I thought their fears exaggerated. But on the 11th of April, as we were rounding the sources of a swamp, we saw the ground rooted up in all directions by the pigs. The men were very excited, expecting to be attacked. It would, indeed, have been awkward, for the ground was covered with hard matted grass, six feet high, and thickly obstructed by trees and bush, with huge boulders of stone scattered about.

We made haste to get away; and late in the afternoon, when we encamped, we had placed four or five miles between the dreaded locality and our camp. But one of our men said they would be sure to follow us. Accordingly, we made every preparation, by placing the pack saddles and baggage in a hollow square, making a breastwork three or four feet high. Those who had hammocks slung them high up in the adjoining trees; the men were too sure of a visit to sleep for a long time, tired as they were. However, late at night, we posted two sentinels, and then turned in.

An hour or so before daylight I was awakened by the alarm of pigs. The men who had no hammocks hurriedly scrambled in behind the baggage. In an instant the pigs were on us by hundreds, gnashing their teeth in a most unpleasant manner, like the

breaking of thousands of hard, dry sticks; and the stench from their bodies was most revolting.

As every man had cartridges ready and arms loaded, they soon received a volley, retreated, and charged again immediately; the men behind the baggage had then to fight with their long knives. Myself and the men in the hammocks were all safe, and made every one of our shots tell on the black, seething mass of bodies.

At first it was an anxious time; but the pigs gradually drew off to a more respectful distance, and, as we remained perfectly quiet, at daybreak they went away. Our baggage, though, had suffered terribly. The raw hide coverings of the pack saddles were slit as though by an axe, and one of the men was badly hurt in the wrist. We found seven pigs dead and four badly wounded; but numbers of the wounded must have got away.

A Terrific Explosion.

SUCH a little goose! She really was. I used to tell her that if she would only leave Phil alone, he would give up his out-door life, and could easily be won over to become a home bird.

"But mamma said I ought to be firm with him, and so I will."

"If mamma would leave you alone, it would be all the better for you," I grumbled.

"For shame, Tom!" she exclaimed, "how can you speak in that way of mamma?"

"Bother!" I ejaculated, and went on reading.

The little goose was my sister Em, who had been married three months to my old friend and companion, Philip Brady; and I was living with them, and joined Phil in his chambers at Gray's Inn.

"If I had known how dissipated he would grow, I would never have married him," sobbed Em.

"Dissipated?—stuff!" I exclaimed.

"See how he smokes," said Em.

"Not more than I do," I replied.

"And drinks," sobbed Em.

"Glass or two of bitter a day, and one drop of whisky at night," I said.

"And stays away from home."

"Nonsense! He's a very good husband, and loves you ten times as much as you deserve," I cried, sharply, for I was getting cross with her.

"I declare, Tom," she cried, in a pet, "you do nothing but take his part."

"Of course," I said, "when you do nothing but worry yourself for no reason whatever."

"I shall think soon that he has found some one else to care for," said Em, now crying outright.

"Why, you think that now, you silly little thing. There, you don't deserve to have such a husband. Well, I'm going to bed. You had better go too. Don't sit up for him while you are in that temper."

"Indeed, but I shall," she cried, with a stamp of her little foot. And, laughing at the pretty little impetuous fairy, with her flashing blue eyes and golden hair, looking in her anger like an angry child, I lit my candle and went off to bed, feeling sure that Phil would laugh at her, give her a kiss, and all would be right again.

But it was not. Phil came home about twelve,

and I heard his latch-key in the door. He rattled his stick in the umbrella stand, and then I heard him go into the little drawing-room.

Now, instead of having been out on any dissipated trip, poor old Phil had been hard at work reading in chambers; for, as he told me afterwards, he had felt that if he brought his work home, he would not do a stroke.

The consequence was, then, that when he came home, and my little goose of a sister began a series of angry reproaches, he bore them all till she declared he was deceiving her, and that she was growing to hate him, which was as base a little fib as she could tell. Phil grew cross in his turn, scolded the little fury, and ended by catching her in his arms and kissing her, telling her to be a good girl for the future.

I found out afterwards that Em pushed him from her, and ran upstairs, banging her bed-room door, and locking herself noisily in.

The cunning little thing!—I heard her directly afterwards turn the key very softly, open the door, and then go outside and listen.

I could hear her breathing every now and then, for she gave a little sob as she waited, evidently longing to "make it up," but prevented by her little angry pride.

"Let 'em alone—best way," I said, as I sat down in my dressing gown, and took up a hard legal book, meaning to read for an hour before I turned in.

Somehow or another, I had not been reading many minutes before the legal phraseology passed away, and I was away up the river Thames, swimming in the cool, sparkling, refreshing water, when I found myself in front of some lock gates, on the other side of which I heard a loud knocking, and some one calling "Tom! Tom!"

"Can't come," I said. "I'm having my bath, and the water's lovely."

"Tom! Tom! Tom! get up—get up quick."

And the knocking continued.

"Eh? What's the matter?" I said, starting into wakefulness, and finding that some one was hammering furiously at my door.

"What's the matter?" I said, opening the door, for Em to rush into my arms with a hysterical cry, as she sobbed out—

"Oh, Tom, Tom, I'm a wicked, wicked wretch!"

"Well, I know that, siss. You always were."

"Tom, dear Tom—oh, it's horrible—and I drove him to do it."

Here there was such a burst of sobs, that, for a few minutes, I could make nothing of her.

"Well, what's he done?" I asked at last. "Gone out again?"

"Oh, no, no," sobbed the poor little trembling thing. "Oh, it's too horrible to be true!"

"Well, well," I said, impatiently; "but what is too horrible to be true?"

"Oh, I can't say it!—I dare not say it. Oh, Tom, Tom, dear Tom—my own darling Phil!"

"Well, well, I know all about that. But you were bullying him an hour ago. What's he done?"

"Go down, Tom, go down," she gasped, in a horrified whisper. "I can't—I can't."

She was nearly fainting, and I placed her in a chair, and bathed her face—at least, I gave her a good dab with my big sponge.

"I'll go down as soon as you can be left," I said, speaking more kindly. "He has not struck you, has he?"

"No, no, Tom," she gasped. "I drove him to it! I drove him to it! Oh, Tom," she wailed, "he has shot himself!"

"Who? Phil?" I cried, laughing—"not he. Why, what a little goose you are!"

"He has, Tom, he has."

"Have you seen it?"

"No, no; but I was leaning over the banisters, listening, when there came a horrible report and a fall; and, oh, Tom, Tom, Tom, I drove him to it!"

"It's all stuff," I said, though beginning to grow anxious.

"No, no, it's true!" she said. "You can smell the smoke on the stairs."

Now, as I knew that Phil was possessed of a revolver, which he had bought to protect the house, and, so as to be ready to hand in the night, kept it in the sideboard drawer in the dining-room, I felt half alarmed, and was about to go down, when Em seized my arm.

"I'll go with you," she gasped, clinging to my arm.

"You had better not," I said.

But she persisted, and put on an appearance of firmness that I could not help admiring.

"There!" she exclaimed, with a shudder, as we reached the stairs—"do you smell the smoke?"

"Yes," I said; "I smell it."

"Oh, make haste, Tom!" she moaned. "He may yet be alive."

We reached the passage, and found that the drawing-room was empty; but the dining-room door was closed, and there was a faint light streaming through by the mat.

As we stood there, Em's courage failed for a moment; but she soon recovered, and, turning the handle, we entered, to find Phil lying on his back upon the sofa, with the shaded lamp casting its ghastly light upon his features.

"Phil! Phil!—my own husband!" shrieked Em.

And she threw herself on her knees by the couch.

"Hallo, pussy," he said, quietly, as he hugged her to him. "I thought you'd come down again."

She started from him with a great gulp of rage.

"Why, you're not shot!" she said, indignantly.

"Shot?—no," he said, sitting up; "who said I was?"

The scene was so comical, that I threw myself into a chair, and roared.

"She said you had shot yourself," I cried.

"You cruel coward!" cried Em, passionately. "You pretended to shoot yourself to frighten me."

"That I didn't," said Phil. "Come, little woman," he continued, firmly, "there has been enough of this nonsense."

For answer, she stamped her foot; and was turning away, a prey to shame, rage, and mortification, when I stopped her.

"Here's the pistol, Em," I said, "and he has got the contents inside him."

And I burst out laughing again, as I took up an empty soda-water bottle from the table.

"That did go off very loudly," said Phil, rising. "You'd better have a soda and B. too, Tom, after this."

"No, thanks," I said, smiling, as I pointed to poor little Em, who was standing sobbing, with her hands covering her face. "I'm off to bed."

I turned towards the door; and, as I reached it, I glanced round, to see that angry, unreasonable little Em had hidden her face on Phil's breast, and from that I judged that the storm was over.

That night proved to be a little turning-point, for Em was very quiet afterwards; and whenever there was the slightest sign of a coming tiff, I used to say—

"I say, Em, I knew a man once who tried to commit suicide with a bottle of Schweppe."

And the soda of that remark used to correct all the acidity in pretty little Em.

Cunning as a Crow.

ROOKS are wary birds. They have a great dread of guns. So watchful are they of the approach of any one carrying firearms, that it is a common belief they can smell gunpowder at long distances. Rooks, however, are not adepts at arithmetic, and along with monkeys and other animals are supposed to be unable to count more than three.

A farmer in the State of Maine has taken advantage of this failing. Exasperated by the depredation of crows among his sprouting corn, he lay in wait for them often and long, but without success. He eventually took his son with him to a shanty in the field, and shortly after sent him away. The hungry birds patiently waited until the farmer also departed, then they helped themselves. The next day he took two persons with him, with the same result; first one person left the field, then another, the rooks cawing their approval, but remaining in their safe position; and not until the third person had been seen to desert from the field would the cunning creatures trust themselves within gunshot of the little building.

The next day half a dozen persons entered it. Presently one of them went back across the field. The rooks mentioned the fact among themselves, but kept their distance among the trees. Another person went away, with the same result. Directly the third emerged from the building and disappeared, the unhappy rooks, having reached the end of their reckoning power, came down in platoons to their deferred meal, unaware of the three armed enemies still remaining in the building, who at once opened fire upon the poor birds, whose great misfortune was that they were unable to count more than three.

It is said that in Germany the war of gamekeepers on the crow tribe has been carried on so long by similar stratagems, that they have been educated up to being able to reckon six, and will not be tempted to approach near the masked battery until at least six of those who have entered have taken their departure.

Mr. Rundle's Goat.

"MY dear, I'm going to purchase a goat," said Mr. Rundle to his wife one morning at breakfast.

"A what?" exclaimed his wife, the picture of astonishment.

"A goat," said Mr. Rundle, making his paper rustle, and looking stern and stately.

For he had read in a scientific paper that there was nothing so excellent for keeping rats and mice out of a cellar as to put a goat in it. The scientific paper did not inform him why it was that rats and mice objected to inhabiting the same cellar with a goat. His cellar was infested with rats, which made raids on his potatoes, flour, pork, and other articles of an edible nature, so he determined to buy a goat.

"Are you crazy?" said Mrs. Rundle, sharply.

"No, madam," he replied, loftily; "neither was I aware that purchasing a goat indicated the necessity for entering a lunatic asylum."

"Well," exclaimed Mrs. Rundle, "of all the things I ever heard—"

She did not finish her sentence, but sat and gasped.

"Hooray, par!" cried his son George, enthusiastically, "I'll ride him. Won't he butt the women! I saw a goat once poke an old man in the back, and he went down on his nose."

"George, eat your bread and butter, and hold your tongue," said "mar," sharply, and "par" went on reading his paper.

Directly after breakfast, Mr. Rundle left the house, and made for the abode of Mr. Whiteley, in Westbourne-grove, who deals in everything, from an elephant to a boat's anchor. He stated his need, and the assistant said he'd send one round to the house in a couple of hours. Then Mr. Rundle went to the city, totted up figures all day, and at five o'clock started for his home. When he reached it, he found his wife locked in a bed-room, his boy and at least twenty others in the yard, and the goat standing on his hind legs keeping the boys at bay. As soon as Master George saw his father, he shouted—

"Par, here he is. Aint he a good one? He's butted Tomkins's fence down, knocked a hole in the washhouse door, smashed the tool-shed, and made for mar. Oh, I say, didn't she run! He aint killed anybody yet, for when he comes at us we get on the wall. I say, boys, aint it fun?"

And George and his companions roared at the memory of the enjoyment.

"Why didn't you put him in the cellar? I want him to tackle the rats, and butt the life out of millions of them."

"Par," said George, "you're stronger than we are. You do it. We're afraid."

Mr. Rundle started for the goat, and about the same time the goat started for him; and before he knew what was the matter he was throwing a beautiful somersault. The boys laughed with great glee, and his promising son roared out as his father landed on his shoulders in the plot where the grass is when it grows.

"Oh, I say, par," cried George, "can't you tumble! It's better than the chaps in the circus—ever so

much. But you ought to come down on your feet. That's the regular style."

"I'll come down on you with the most tremendous thrashing you've ever had, as soon as I've put this goat in the cellar," said Mr. Rundle, still lying on his back.

He didn't attempt to get up for a while—not, indeed, until the goat, imagining he had killed his master, commenced eating up the grape vine. Then Mr. Rundle stole noiselessly upon him, grasped him by the hind legs, threw him, and commenced to drag him towards the basement.

"George," he shouted, "open the cellar door, and be quick about it."

George hurried to obey the command, and Mr. Rundle succeeded in dragging the goat to the door, and hurling him through it, and then he bolted the door and shouted—

"I don't care whether the rats eat you, or you butt them to death."

Then he walked upstairs, knocked at his wife's bed-room door, informed her that the goat was safely locked in the cellar, and told her he wanted his dinner.

"Mr. Rundle," said his wife, after she had unlocked the door, "do you think that I'm going to live with a man that has such murderous animals about the place? If you don't kill that goat, I'll leave this house, and go home to my father."

"Go to your father, and be hanged!" said Rundle, fuming with anger, for the places that the goat had touched began to pain him. "I'd be glad if you'd never left your father. That goat is not going to be killed."

Here a terrific scream was heard from the yard, and downstairs rushed Rundle.

A sad scene met his view.

The servant girl, not knowing that the goat was in the cellar, unbolted the door, and was about descending into it for the beer. She had reached the second step, when something struck her, and she went flying into the yard. And then there was a whirlwind of goat; and he danced round her, and she screamed, and the neighbours stuck their heads out of the windows and yelled "Police!"

Fortunately, with all his fierceness, that goat had some compunction about butting a hapless maid to death; so he contented himself with making feints.

But at every feint he made, the girl screamed, the neighbours screamed, and Mrs. Rundle, who had put her head out of the window, screamed also.

"Two pounds ten!" muttered Mr. Rundle, as he looked on. "Oh, the wretched beast!"

There was no help for it, though; and when Mr. Rundle thoroughly took in the situation, he rushed to his bed-room, grasped his revolver, and soon the poor goat was a corpse.

It was shortly afterwards discovered that during the short time the goat had been in the cellar he had knocked all the barrels to pieces, and that flour, potatoes, onions, and other vegetables were floating about in rich pork brine and beer. Mr. Rundle has stopped his subscription to the scientific paper, and says that editors who set forth such rampant ideas deserve to be hung; for a greater act of social atrocity he never knew.

The War Correspondent.

BY THE WANDERING JEW.

FROM PRISON.

THERE is nothing to write about—absolutely nothing. The Turks are firing ball and shell at the Russians, and these last are sending them back again. The Cossacks are scouring the dirty country, and making it more dirty; for they keep encountering the Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks, and then there is a scrimmage, blood is spilt, and the Circassians, finding that there is nothing to plunder, make off like Bashi-Bazouks. The hospitals are full of sick, wounded, and flies; and those flies are fat.

Altogether, the place is horrible, and the odours not to be borne. Nicopolis has fallen, Rustchuk is invested, the Muscovites are across the Balkans, and are streaming over the Sistova bridge by thousands every day; while guns, ammunition, and provisions flow in like a stream.

The Turks are like Mr. Winkle, they are going to begin, but they don't do it; while the Russians are carrying all before them. But, I say, they would not toddle over the country at such a rate if they had the Britons who never shall be slaves before them. By Jove, sir, a few of our Aldershot boys would waken up both sides.

There, I tell you what it is: you make a bargain with Government, so as to make it warm for ourselves, and then send me out ten thousand men—horse, foot, and artillery—and I'll conquer the whole country, clear out Russian, Turk, Circassian, Bashi-Bazouk, Kurd, and every other blackguard; when we shall have secured for England a most lovely addition; and I'll see that you and I have a fine slice a-piece.

What do you say, my boy, to five hundred acres a-piece of garden—rose garden—a delightful place that would, as George Robins used to say, be perfection if it were not for the litter of rose leaves and the noise of the nightingales.

They call them bulbuls out here, and they sing deliciously. Just fancy what a life, dear boy—you and I—like that jolly old detective of Wilkie Collins's in "The Moonstone"—the fellow who took to rose-growing. Well, out here, you know, we should grow acres of roses, and then set up stills to make otto of roses, eh? I believe you, my boy! No sham about it. Just think the matter over, for the country really is beautiful: a place where only man is vile, as the poet said—present company not included. Woman excepted too, for she really is lovely.

I say this from quite an ethnological point of view; for I am one of the least impressionable of beings. In fact, sir—I can't help it, it is my failing; ladies must not be hard upon me for my confession—I am so unimpressionable that I am fain to own that I admire a cow quite as much as I do a lady. In fact, if that cow be an Alderney, and the cream yellow, I prefer the cow.

A strange confession, you will say, after describing the women of the country. But that description is second-hand—Rublu Pacha's, in fact; so I send it to you for what it is worth.

Well, sir, I am sorry to disappoint your readers; but my letter must again be short, for there is nothing whatever to communicate, except carnage, cholera, and dysentery. Kezanlik is taken; the Russians hold the Shipka Pass; the Turkish commander-in-chief is superseded, after "blowing," as the Yankees call it, at Shumla; General Zimmerman is coming out of the Dobrudschia, after driving everybody before him there; and generally there is a clean sweep going on. But, as I before said, like Mr. Winkle, the Turks are going to begin directly. In fact, they are taking off their coats. They have wonderful plans, and they intend killing half the Russians, and throwing the other half into the Danube; which is the way they served them, as you may remember, before, when they first crossed—at least so they said—at Constantinople.

Times are getting hard here. The correspondents of all the other papers have been shut up, or else let out on a sort of ticket-of-leave; and they have to submit all their letters to the Turkish bureau, where they are touched up to suit the Turkish public taste; and the—there, I won't call them lies, because the term is strong—the fibs that have been sent over are as big as balloons.

You alone, sir, get the pure and unadulterated article. There is no Turkish water with my spirit; but I send you the facts, without suppressions made at the dictation of some haughty, coffee-drinking Turkish bey.

How do I manage it, when the telegraphs and postal arrangements are in the hands of the Turks? I will tell you.

I foresaw this difficulty, and laid my finger to my nose before I started. I thought deeply over the difficulties, and before I left London I went to two great authorities on pigeons.

Now, mind this, I don't say that I went to Tegetmeier and Fulton, any more than I say I went to Bill Wiggins in Seven Dials; but I say I went to two great authorities on pigeons, consulted them, and the consequence was that I came away with a large stone two-gallon bottle of pigeons' milk and six dozen eggs.

Behold the result! I have always a couple of tame Syrian cuckoos setting in the nearest cypress tree, and carrier or homing pigeons are hatched out as fast as I want them. These birds soon fledge, and are ready to bear my missives right away to London; and the consequence is that you, sir, are the only editor who gets his news direct.

To diverge for a few moments into natural history, I may say here, as war news is so scarce, that it is singular that the strange property possessed by the carrier pigeon of flying off straight for home should be transferred to its young even while latent in the egg. In fact, I hardly thought it possible; but the wondrous truth was communicated to me by one of the great authorities—mind I don't say it was Tegetmeier—but there is the fact proved to you day by day, as the pigeons thrown up by me in Bulgaria fly straight to you in London, with these letters from the seat of war.

By the way, those pigeons ought to fetch a good price; and of course, deducting your own commission, you will put the coin aside for me.

Next week I hope to have important information for you, which I will not weaken by giving you hints of its value.

Till then, adieu. I kiss your hands, as we say out here, and those of all your readers.

NOTE TO EDITOR.

Here begins the private, dear boy. You had better take your scissors and cut it off, lest that blunderbuss of a sub-editor of yours should send it in to the printers.'

By the way, I wish I could see your paper out here. I have never set eyes on it. One fellow told me that you were illustrating my articles, and giving extravagant portraits of me and my doings; but of course that is chaff, and I don't believe it.

Well, I suppose you want to know all about my position here. So, first and foremost, let me tell you that I have seen nothing of our consul, and must beg of you to hunt him up per telegram. Or, I tell you what—run down to Whitehall, and see Robert Bourke. He's a good fellow. Tell him I'm boxed up here in a dirty, howling cave of a dungeon, eating dustman's sandwiches—to wit, penny rolls with a mouse inside; only they are not penny rolls of white bread, but nasty black stuff, which cost a piastre each. Then I have to drink water—do you hear that, water?—I, a man who never so degraded myself before.

Look you, I consider the man who drinks water to be no better than the savage who tears the living blood-stained flesh from some animal he has just slain, and devours it like a wild beast. The water and the flesh are uncooked—unprepared for the palate of a civilized being; and it is cruel to keep me in such a state.

Bourke will send to Layard, and he will have me out in an *augenblick*.

Of course, that's all gammon about the pigeons' milk; but your readers will drink it in, and like it. They know there is a Peristeraonic Society at the Crystal Palace, and that letters came out of Paris during the Prussian War; and they'll believe it like fun.

But, I say, I shall hang myself in my braces; for though there are no seven pillars here all covered with Gothic mould, as Byron says, if I stay much longer my hair will all turn white in a single night; and, seeing what a wretched stipend you pay me, I sha'n't have the money to invest in a few bottles of something to restore the colour when I get back.

Let me see, where was I?

I hardly know. I know where I am, though; and these dirty stones are as hard as an editor's heart. Oh, I remember—I had just entered the bey's harem, and I was congratulating myself that it was not in a costume similar to that adopted by a young gentleman of Spanish extraction named Juan.

I helped the lady to alight beneath a passion-flower-covered porch, and followed her into a corridor lit up by lamps; while the flowers on either side were in such profusion that, for the moment, I forgot where I was, and expected to hear the Guards' band, under Godfrey, strike up the "Manola," "Sweethearts," or "Blue Danube" waltz; for it seemed to me that I was at a night *fête* at the Bo-

tanic Gardens, Regent's Park, and that I should soon meet Duke Teck and the Princess Mary.

Those ideas fled, sir, directly, for the heat was intense; and as I followed the lady down a long corridor, I heard voices behind me, and if there was not that abominable bey come home, and he had brought Rublu Pacha with him.

The fact is, the lady and I had forgotten how time went, and hours had glided by, and we were caught.

I was in a furious perspiration, and the drops fell on the white marble floor.

That did it. I glanced down, and saw that the drops of perspiration which fell were black as ink.

"Burnt cork!" I ejaculated; for I did not like to swear in a harem containing nine hundred ladies.

And then, glancing at one of the lustrous mirrors at my side, I saw that the gently teeming dew was washing off the whole of the Nubian black; that I was already piebald, and, allowing for sun-burning, in a few minutes I should be white.

"Oh, fair and handsome stranger," exclaimed the lady, "what shall we do? They will sack me and bowstring you. Alas! alas! alas!"

"A pretty lass! a pretty lass! a pretty lass!" I sighed.

And, involuntarily taking out my pocket handkerchief to wipe my dew-bathed brow, I removed the rest of the black, and was a Nubian slave no more.

"I shall be slain! I shall be slain!" sobbed the beauteous creature. "Not that I care for myself, but for you, oh, handsome stranger!"

"Stop a moment, my dear," I said. "I have a thought. Never shall it be said that a Solomon was not wise and noble enough to succour a maiden in distress."

As I spoke, the voices came nearer; and from an ejaculation behind me, and the gritting sound made by a blade drawn from its sheath, I knew that we were observed.

"Quick!" I said; "I will save you at all hazards. If all comes right, be on your donkey in the lane next Tuesday night at nine."

"I will—I will," she gasped, beside herself with fear.

And she shuddered, and closed her eyes, as if she felt herself being veiled with the hideous sack.

"Now, then," I said, as I grasped her, "squeal loudly."

She raised such a shrill shriek on the instant that the walls echoed, and struggling at the same moment, it seemed to one who was coming up that I was trying to carry the lady off.

The next instant she was torn from my grasp, I was surrounded, and a dozen scimitars and yataghans were pointed at my throat.

"Stop!" I roared—"what would you do?"

"Why, it's old Solomon!" said Rublu, who had come up with his friend the bey. "Why, what are you doing here?"

"Allah is great, and it is *kismet*," I replied, crossing my arms on my breast.

"Oh, yes, we know all about that," said the bey, furiously. "I've heard that remark before. What the Sheitan are you doing here?"

"Oh, Solomon! Solomon!" cried Rublu, putting his hand over his face, and peering at me through

his fingers, "I shouldn't have thought it of you. Oh!"

"Pon honour," I exclaimed, "really you misjudge me. Look here, old fellow, make these niggers take the points of their blades from my throat, or they'll be having some accident."

"What are you doing here, dog of an infidel?" roared the bey.

"My dear sir," I said, calmly, as I drew myself up to my full height, "if you will allow me, I will explain. I am a newspaper correspondent."

"Well?"

"Look here, Rublu," I exclaimed. "I'm sure there'll be an accident directly with some of those edge tools. Make those scoundrels put them down."

Rublu interposed, and the blades were covered; when, speaking with more comfort, I continued—

"As a newspaper correspondent, sir, it is my duty to investigate, to seek to learn everything I possibly can, and transmit it to the journal that prints my letters."

"What's that got to do with your being here?" cried the bey.

"It explains it," I replied. "I wanted information regarding the interiors of the Turkish houses. I followed this lady in the disguise of a Nubian slave, when, discovering the imposition, she boxed my ears and cried for help. I took hold of her to implore her to restrain her cries, when you came up and seized me. Behold, I have spoken."

"Yes, and for the last time," cried the bey.

And my last hour would have sounded, had it not been for the interposition of Rublu Pacha, who behaved like a brick.

All he could do, though, was to get my life spared; and that wretch of a bey contented himself with having me dragged off, and cast into a loathsome dungeon, where I have been ever since, and I am now.

I wouldn't mind, only it is so damp and rheumatic. If they'd put Turkey carpets down, and let me be properly waited on, I wouldn't care; but here I am, soaking up so much moisture, that I never want anything to drink; and if I did, I should not get it.

I was in hopes that Rublu would have represented my case to Mr. Layard, but he has not; and now, as I am in this predicament all through my zeal in your service, just stir your stumps, and get me out; for I sha'n't write any more letters till you do, so please mind this. I'm living on your money, and paying champagne prices for drops of sour wine and a filthy roll. So, look sharp.

Rublu's south of the Balkans now. Get me free, and let me join him, so as to be once more upon the tented field.

Look alive, for this place swarms with rats, and they are getting very attentive.

Written on a piece of pocket handkerchief, this 22nd day of July, 1877.

SOLOMON.

A REPORTER is terrifically graphic in describing the recent collision of railroad trains:—"The engines rushed at each other like malign and enraged monsters, grappled with a tremendous crash, reared from the track in a mortal wrestle, and fell into hopeless and disjointed fragments on the ground."

Nesting of the Kingfisher.

THE following very interesting account of the rapidity with which the kingfisher constructs its nest may be new to our readers, as it has only appeared in Mr. Gould's magnificent folio work on the "Birds of the British Isles":—

The kingfisher is very generally dispersed over all parts of England, wherever there is water. Even the waters of Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park are seldom without an example, sitting motionless in some nook or corner.

To find a kingfisher on the Thames, or, indeed, on any other river, some knowledge of the habits of the bird must have been previously acquired. If the water be clear, it may be seen over the main stream; but if turbid and heavy, and its favourite food is not visible, the bird instinctively resorts to a neighbouring brook, or some back water; there he patiently sits on some overhanging bush, and drops on any aquatic insect, stickleback, or other small fish.

There are times, particularly in the autumn, when a partial migration takes place, and the young, at least, leave the river altogether for the salt marshes near the sea. Here every ditch crossed by a rail forms a perch, whence it keeps a sharp look-out for crustaceous or other aquatic creatures, in the choice of which it is not-over nice or particular. Voracity, in fact, is not only one of the characteristics of our own bird, but of the whole race.

The Australian kingfisher will attack a small rat, the English bird a bullhead or gudgeon the length of its own body, by which means it is not infrequently choked. No greater proof can be given of the immense number of fish destroyed by these birds than the fact that, of the bones cast up in the shape of lengthened pellets from the stomachs of a single pair, a large dry nest was formed in a few days. That such a quantity of bones should be cast up in so short a period may seem strange; but facts are stubborn things, and I will relate an incident of this kind which came under my own observation.

On the 18th of April, 1859, during one of my fishing excursions on the Thames, I saw a hole in a precipitous bank, which I felt assured was the nesting-place of a kingfisher; and on passing a spare top of my fly rod to the extremity—a distance of nearly three feet—I brought out some freshly-cast bones of fish, convincing me that I was right in my surmise.

The day following, I again visited the spot with a spade, and, after removing about two feet square of the turf, dug down to the nest without disturbing the passage that led to it. Here I found four eggs, placed on the usual layer of fish bones. These I removed with care, and then replaced the earth, beating it down as hard as the bank itself, and restored the turfy sod. A fortnight after, the bird was seen to leave the hole again, and my surprise was awakened that she had taken to her old breeding quarters a second time.

I again visited the place on the twenty-first day from the date of my previous exploration, and on passing the top of my fly rod up the hole, found not only that it was of the former length, but that the female was within.

I then took a large mass of cotton wool from my collecting box, and stuffed it to the extremity, in order to preserve the eggs from damage during my again laying it open from above. On removing the sod, and digging down as before, I came to the cotton wool, and beneath it a well-formed nest of fish bones, the size of a small saucer, the walls of which were fully half an inch thick, together with eight beautiful translucent pale pinky eggs, and the old female herself. This nest I removed with the greatest care, and it is now deposited in the proper resting-place for so interesting an object, the British Museum.

Sight of Ants.

THE organs of vision are in most ants very complex and conspicuous. There are generally three eyes arranged in a triangle on the top of their heads, and on each side a large compound eye; containing sometimes more than two thousand facets between them. Nevertheless, the sight of ants does not seem to be very good.

In order to test how far ants are guided by vision, I made the following experiments:—I placed a common lead pencil on a board, fastening it upright, so as to serve as a landmark. At the base I then placed a glass containing food, and then put a *L. niger* to the food. When she knew her way from the glass to the nest and back again perfectly well, she went quite straight backwards and forward. I then took an opportunity when the ant was on the glass, and moved the glass with the ant on it about three inches. Now, under such circumstances, if she had been much guided by sight, she could not of course have had any difficulty in finding her way to the nest. As a matter of fact, however, she was entirely at sea; and after wandering about for some time, got back to the nest by another and very round-about route.

I then again varied the experiment as follows:—I placed the food in a small china cup on the top of the pencil, which thus formed a column seven and a half inches high. When the ant once knew her way, she went very straight to and from the nest. This puzzled her very much. She went over and over the spot where the pencil had previously stood, retraced her steps several times almost to the nest, and then returned along the whole line, showing great perseverance, if not much power of vision. I then moved the pencil six inches. She found the pencil at last, but only after many meanderings.—*Sir John Lubbock.*

A DANDY with a huge beard offered himself to a young lady, who refused him on the ground that she would never marry such a bare-faced creature. The dandy at once had his physiognomy clean shaved, and then renewed his application; but the girl again refused him, on the ground that he was now more bare-faced than before.

AN American candidate for a judgeship writes:—“When a man leaves our side and goes to the other side he is a traitor, and we always felt that there was a subtle something wrong about him. But when a man leaves the other side and comes over to us, then he is a man of great moral courage, and we always felt that he had sterling stuff in him.”

Amongst the Powder Monkeys.

JUST at this time, when the air is filled with the rumours of war, the reader will probably feel an interest in seeing how gunpowder—the “villainous saltpetre”—is made.

Let us go, then, up and down the long vistas of watery greenery, under bowers of shrubs, and masses of ivy, in which lie hidden here and there charge-houses and magazines, each surrounded by its tiny moat, and connected with the shore by a drawbridge—carefully wetted before a foot is placed on it. Huge outworks or traverses surround the larger of these *dépôts*, with the object of confining the effect of an accident as much as possible to its own locality.

So much for the houses wherein gunpowder is stored during its manufacture; but when it is actually under manipulation, it is considered desirable to deal with the dangerous stuff in lightly built wooden houses, roofed lightly, so as to diminish as much as possible the force of an explosion. These houses, of which there are many a score, are placed in the watery labyrinth at such distances from each other that the explosion of the small quantity of inflammable stuff contained in any one of them would be very unlikely to spread destruction broadcast. The fear often expressed of lightning striking a powder-mill is therefore not based upon any accurate knowledge of what powder-mills really are. Lightning would hardly strike eighty acres at once; and if it descended upon one building, the chances are very great that the mischief would be confined to the spot struck. In the case of magazines, charge-houses, and other *dépôts*, an accident of this kind would probably be unaccompanied by any loss of life; and an incorporating mill might also be blown up without human sacrifice—as the guardian of this most dangerous part of the entire process prudently keeps outside the mill, and only drops in occasionally to moisten the “charge.”

Putting myself under the care of a guide, who kindly but firmly insists that I shall begin at the beginning, I follow a grain of powder from its original elements to its avatar as a merchantable commodity.

The process by which blasting powder is produced is not generally known. I will premise by stating that the composition of gunpowder is as follows:—75 per cent. of nitrate of potash—*i.e.*, saltpetre, familiarly treated as an old friend and called “petre”—10 per cent. of sulphur, and 15 per cent. of charcoal. The latter combustible is made on the spot. From the marshy lands of Sussex comes good store of alder and of willow, and from Prussia comes that best parent of charcoal—dogwood. For charcoal-making, alder and willow are cut in the spring when the sap rises, so that the bark may be easily removed. These precious woods, in pieces varying from the thickness of a prize-fighter’s biceps to that of a lady’s “ring” finger, lie piled around in huge stacks. Carefully cut into suitable lengths, and peeled, they are now packed into a retort, and converted into charcoal, the gases evolved from the wood being so carefully utilized that, during the latter part of the operation, they perform the

work of fuel. The wood, having been converted into perfect charcoal, is now withdrawn from the retort, and allowed to cool very gradually in the open air. The carbonic element of gunpowder is now ready for grinding and “bolting,” until it is reduced to that almost impalpable powder which is loved and devoured by dyspeptic patients.

Sulphur, which arrives in stony blocks packed in barrels, is simply ground and “bolted,” and is then ready for use. “Petre” demands a far more lengthy preparation. This obstinate material arrives from Bengal in the shape of large crystals, somewhat resembling very coarse but light-coloured sugar, and in this condition is utterly unfit for gunpowder making. It is first mixed with water and heated in long, shallow pans, and so soon as crystals begin to form on the top is briskly agitated with long rakes, when the crystals fall rapidly to the bottom. This agitation is kept up for a long while, until the crystals line the bottom of the pan thickly. They are then collected into heaps, and the water is allowed to drain off. This cleansing operation is repeated, and the “petre” is finally dosed with distilled water, which in draining off removes with it the last lingering remnants of impurity. When perfectly dry, the crystals are called “finished petre”—pure nitrate of potash—and are ready for conversion into gunpowder. Inasmuch as even in its raw state “petre” is a costly commodity, every effort is made to extract from it the last crystal of the precious nitrate. The “liquor” strained from the “petre” during the operations described is all carefully boiled over and over again, till every bit of nitrate of potash that will part from baser allies is extracted.

A house filled with these pots of great crystals is a marvellously pretty sight—myriads of crystals, of endless variety and shape, sparkling in the sunlight. As if to show that the art of careful management could be carried no farther, the very bags in which “petre” arrives are boiled up, and the soup extracted; and finally, the sweepings of the “charging-house” are also consigned to the pot. “Finished petre,” after being tested with nitrate of silver to prove its purity, is now stowed away in large bins until wanted for use. All the operations just enumerated are conducted with the greatest possible precaution against the intrusion of “grit.” This is the *bête noir* of the gunpowder-maker, and a fertile provocative of explosions. The open skylights of the houses for drying “petre” are therefore masked with fine wirework, to prevent the ingress of martins and swallows.

Of the three constituents of gunpowder, powdered charcoal occasions the greatest anxiety to the manufacturer, as when in a state of minute subdivision it is eminently subject to spontaneous combustion. It is, therefore, most carefully stored, and every particle of charcoal dust is removed from the mill at the conclusion of the day’s work, in order to avoid any accident preventable by human care and foresight.

To the mixing-house are brought “petre,” charcoal, and sulphur; and these are there weighed out with great exactness, and thoroughly mixed in a stirring machine. When allied, the three demons—which while apart were comparatively harmless—at once acquire a dangerous power. The “green

charge," as it is technically called, contains, in fact, all the dangerous without the useful properties of gunpowder, and requires to go through many difficult and critical operations before it assumes its familiar form. Combustive and explosive power inheres in this "green charge," which is treated with all becoming respect. Packed in canvas bags, containing each sufficient to occupy an "incorporating mill" for some hours, the green charges are conveyed to the mills, standing in front of which I elicited from my painstaking guide that here, if anywhere, there was a little risk of explosion.

The charge is placed on the bed of the mill, over which roll huge iron "edge-runners" till the charge is considered thoroughly incorporated. It may be remarked that the strength of the powder greatly depends upon the more or less perfect manner in which the materials are incorporated—the best qualities being left in the mill for the longest time. Lightly constructed as are the incorporating mills, the doors and windows are left open, the roof is of the highest possible character—"made to blow up"—and the careful foreman of a set of mills elects to avail himself of a "ticket for outside." Now and then, however, he has to perform an important duty—that of moistening the charge. This operation requires considerable judgment and practice, inasmuch as if the charge be made too damp it is very likely to explode, and if it be allowed to get too dry also explodes, but far from violently.

These mills are mostly in pairs, worked by a water-wheel, and are fitted with an ingenious contrivance which, should any accident occur in mill A, at once "douses the charge" in mill B, and prevents a second explosion.

Many hours in the mill produce an important alteration in the appearance of the charge. From a dry powder, it is converted into a hard, brittle cake, full of explosiveness and destruction. This cake is broken up into rough pieces, which are stowed in barrels, under the charge of a dusky gondolier, who guides his eerie-looking boat along one of the innumerable canals till he reaches a charge-house, surrounded by a deep moat, and only approachable over a wet drawbridge. From this storehouse the broken cake is, when wanted, conveyed to the "press-house."

Surrounded by water, and full of workmen, this building must be approached with considerable caution. Stepping over a row of wet planks, I come at last to the boundary between the press-house and the outer world. No sole that has trod the "gritty" surface of mother earth may enter into this abode of darkness. On the farther side of the wooden barrier are the "elephants' feet"—huge Brobdingnagian slippers, into whose sole no iron has entered, made of stout leather sewed together. Into these I am requested to put my feet quickly, deftly, and at once, that no lurking grit may betray, not only myself, but the workers within, to destruction.

For a moment or two I can see nothing but a dim vision of wheels turning, and of dark figures moving through the gloom. I cannot see much, it is true; but I can both hear and feel. As I step over the uneven floor, rugged and uncomfortable, my ears are saluted with a hideous scraunch-sraunch. I am

walking on gunpowder—crushing the cake underneath my feet—I am breathing gunpowder, for the air is thick with dust. Gunpowder above, around, and below, in rough pieces, huge cakes, or fine powder. I can feel that saltpetre is working into the pores of my skin, and that I am gradually assimilating in hue to the natives who are employed in reducing the cake-charge first into dust, and then in making it into a cake of far greater density by the help of an hydraulic press.

Slipping my feet neatly out of the giant slippers, I now follow the cake of pressed powder. Subjected to a pressure of 175 tons, it has assumed the hue and consistency of a slab of slate, and has been again cracked into rough chips. These are carried in one of the funereal boats to the granulating or, technically, the "corning" house. This building, like many others, can only be entered on "elephants' feet," and is occupied by three sets of cylinders, between which the stony chips are successively passed. The result is, as might be expected, a crushed mass composed of large and small grains, and a certain proportion of material which has been crushed to powder rather than granulated. This is either repressed into a slab, or is sold to the firework-makers as "meal powder."

This and the various sizes of grain are separated by sifting, into pebble powder, ordinary blasting powder, and "sporting" powder of various dimensions. Large parchment sieves separate the pebble, or "large blasting powder," from the small varieties.

The different kinds of powder, having now been classified by sifting, are removed to the stove or drying-house. I confess the operation of drying powder at a stove did not occur to me as one that I was absolutely compelled to see; but my guide assured me that it was the safest place in the entire establishment. Safe or not, it was a long way off.

Away we marched between endless canals, and over countless bridges, carefully "rimmed" to prevent the dreaded grit from falling into boats passing beneath.

The drying-house is curiously constructed—is surrounded firstly by a deep moat, and secondly by a "traverse" of great height and thickness, covered with ancient ivy. At a considerable distance from this building are the boilers for generating the steam used to raise the temperature of the drying chamber to 125 deg. Fahr. The smoke is also a subject of anxiety, and is conducted through flues to a tall chimney a hundred yards farther off, to avoid all possible danger from sparks.

The interior of the drying-house is uncomfortably hot, and is full of racks occupied by little trays in which the powder is laid out to dry. It is even when dry not yet finished, but is carried off to a dusting-house, where it is made to revolve in a huge cylinder made partly of gauze. The major part of the dust having been got rid of by these means, the powder is fit for glazing—an operation which removes the last clinging particles of dust, and, giving the powder a brilliant colour, renders it more merchantable than it would be in the rough.

The glazing-house is on the bank of the Darent, and is guarded with extraordinary precautions. In approaching it I was distinctly warned not to put

my feet on a plank over which the workmen, clad in "elephant" slippers, were passing, lest from my shoes a morsel of grit might be transferred to theirs.

Glazing is performed by putting the powder into a kind of rotary barrel with a small quantity of black lead, which imparts to the explosive matter that beauty of appearance which is considered indispensable. The length of this operation varies according to the quality of the powder to be treated.

Pebble powder about the size of haricot beans requires no more than three or four hours for glazing, but finer grains require nearly half a day in the revolving barrel before they acquire the necessary polish. The powder is now packed in barrels or in tin cases, which are made on the premises, with considerable care to avoid leakage; and in the case of the barrels, immense caution is required to prevent the adherence of any dust or other possible provocative of an explosion.

Leaving the works at the hour when the men "knock off," I find those worthy fellows going through a complicated performance before entering the ordinary everyday world. On coming to work in the morning, each man is compelled to divest himself of his ordinary costume, and to put on a singular suit of clothing supplied by his employers. Jacket, vest, and "continuations" are made of a thick woollen material, which, whatever its original colour, soon becomes black. No particle of metal enters into the composition of this peculiar suit. The buttons are of bone, and the vestments are pocketless, lest knives, matches, or fuzees should inadvertently be introduced into the works. For a like reason, no workman is allowed to leave during the day, and a convenient room is provided for dining in.

When work is over, the men troop up, if not as black as sweeps, very nearly so; but I am assured that it is all "clean" dirt, and comes off easily. The men now take off their pocketless working suits, plunge into a bath, emerge as other men, don their ordinary habiliments, and go their way rejoicing.

The Affable Man.

A MOTHER and babe were among the passengers waiting at one of our great termini. She had the child carefully wrapped up; and this fact, perhaps, attracted the attention of a big, unpleasant-looking fellow, with a heavy overcoat and a rusty carpet bag in his hand. Sitting down beside her, he remarked—

"Cold weather for such little people, isn't it?"

She faintly nodded.

"Does he seem to feel it much?" continued the man.

She shook her head.

"Is it a healthy child?" he asked, seeming greatly interested.

"He was, up to a few moments ago," she snapped out; "but I'm afraid he's smelt so much whiskey that he'll have the *delirium tremens* before night!"

The man got up, and walked out of the room, and was afterwards seen buying cloves and cinnamon to correct the whiskey.

Earthquakia.

"EARTHQUAKIA" is that region which extends along more than 7,000 miles of coast, from Southern Chile to the North of California. Here the sword of Damocles is always suspended; and although the figure may not be literally appropriate, it is applicable enough to the feelings of some of the residents, or at least the occasional visitors—for the former are somewhat used to it, and prepared to run out in their shirts at night on the slightest notice, although some of them say that the more they think of it the less they like it.

One person never fully realized his danger till he found himself involuntarily standing tiptoe to avert descent into the opening earth. Large cracks and recent patches in handsome buildings were all round. At Mendoza, on the Argentine side of the Cordillera, in 1861, three-quarters of a population of 20,000 perished in five minutes, and the whole city was destroyed.

Iquique, in Peru, was almost destroyed by fire in October, 1875. The slightness of the building, the wooden footways, and the impregnation of the soil with nitrate, made destruction rapid and overwhelming. Prior to this conflagration, it had not by any means recovered from an earthquake in 1868, the effects of which were still visible to a large extent in many of the adjacent districts. Three or four miles inland from the town of Arica, the United States steamship *Waterloo*, with another vessel, was carried thus far, and left high and dry by the tremendous earthquake wave. And now we get information of the destruction of Iquique by a fresh earthquake, the tidal wave that accompanied it having destroyed quite a fleet of shipping.

Hoaxing an Organ Grinder.

THAT boy Tom has been at his tricks again.

He saw an Italian the other day, in charge of a new mitrailleuse piano, and going up to him, with a very innocent look, asked—

"How many tunes do you play?"

"Sixteen shunes—nice, sweet shunes," replied the man.

"My father is fond of music, but he is a little deaf," continued the boy.

"Oh, dat make no deference—I mak a him hear."

The boy led the way to where a plaster bust of Sir Isaac Newton had been arranged in a bay window to look like a living man, and the Italian moistened his hand and began on the crank.

He ground out all the tunes in rotation, and then began at the bottom and ground back up the scale, till he got through all the tunes again. The man in the bay window didn't move a hair, and the Italian drew a long breath and sighed—

"Play moar muzeek—mak a him hear soon."

He ran out eight tunes, and threw some gravel at the window. The bust didn't even work its ears, and the Italian leaned against the organ and loudly sang—

"Oh, who shall dinks of me som moar
When I am far a-wa-y?"

The seven other tunes were rattled off at a lively

pace, while the man coughed, whistled, kicked on the pavement, and kept bowing, in order to attract the deaf man's attention.

"Sing louder—play harder!" called the boy from close by.

The Italian moistened his hand again, and played "Sweethearts waltz" and "The Two Obadiahs" at express speed, and a crowd began to collect. He kept his eyes on the bust, and gave no heed to the crowd, and the organ-box was smoking hot, when he paused to wipe his face; and then, leaving the handle, he went up to the window to have a good look at the father who was fond of music—the man whom he had made his victim. His quiet grin faded into a look of woe and misery and murder, and getting his eyes on the boy, he ran after him, till a noise behind warned him that some one was turning his handle, when he returned. It was fortunate for everybody that they did not understand bad language in Italian.

Wrestling Camels.

AMONG the camels bought at Smyrna were four fine Loks. These have all been trained as "Pehlevans," or wrestlers—wrestling matches between camels being an amusement in which Turks take great delight, although they sometimes get a fine animal maimed in the sport. Many gentlemen keep them for no other purpose; and one person in Smyrna kept twenty at one time, for the amusement of his wife, who had a fondness for the sport.

The camels are trained to wrestling when quite young; they exhibit great dexterity in throwing their antagonists, and seem to take much pleasure in the fray. We had a young one on board, only a month old, and having been born under the flag he was christened "Uncle Sam."

One of the Turks amused himself on the voyage making a "Pehlevan" of him; and when six weeks old he was more than a match for his teacher, using his legs, neck, and mouth with such dexterity, and exhibiting such wonderful strength in so young a thing, that he became a very rough playmate, and frequently hurt the men on the deck by throwing himself on them suddenly, and knocking them down.

This feature seems to be natural to the camel, for when two strange ones meet together where there are any females, they immediately have a wrestling match for the supremacy, and the conquered one ever afterwards acknowledges his inferiority by not so much as daring to look at a female. Unlike the amusement of bull-baiting, this wrestling is a harmless pastime, though the animals do sometimes get their legs broken, or are stiff for some time after with their bruises; well-trained animals seldom injure each other, being taught to throw their antagonist by getting his neck under their fore leg (the right), and then throwing the whole weight of their body on him, and bringing him to the ground.

SMITH spent two whole days and nights in considering an answer to the conundrum—"Why is an egg underdone like an egg overdone?" He would suffer no one to tell him, and at last hit upon the solution—because both are hardly done.

The Egotist's Note-book.

THE enterprising manager of an establishment which undertakes to "perform funerals" in the most approved style at moderate charges, announces that in order to maintain the well-known reputation of the house, and to keep pace with modern requirements, he has just had constructed a number of light and elegant hearses and mourning coaches expressly for the summer season! It is refreshingly cool to meet with a man who takes such pains to study the comfort of his customers, living or dead.

A gentleman going home late at night, through a somewhat dangerous locality, was suddenly set upon by four ruffians, who not only demanded his money, but began to knock him about.

Clearing himself for a moment, the gentleman quietly backed against the wall, and, with great presence of mind, drew a revolver from his coat pocket.

The instant the rascals heard the click of the cock, the whole four of them took to their heels like lightning, exclaiming as they ran—

"Oh, the mean coward!"

Two assassins were recently put upon their trial in France. Before the proceedings commenced, their advocate told them that they had the right to challenge any of the jurymen to whose presence they might object.

"I don't see the names of any friends here," said one of them, looking down the list.

"That's all right," remarked the other; "then we sha'n't be convicted through professional jealousy."

A lady gave to her little boy three gold-fish as a present.

Full of curiosity, the little fellow fed them and worried them so much that two of them soon died.

A few days afterwards his mother was shocked to see the other one lying in the water, cut in halves; and on seeking an explanation, was innocently informed—

"Oh, ma, he was so lonely all by himself, and I tried to make two of him."

A lady asked a theatrical manager whom she knew for a box, which the latter, the free list being "entirely suspended," was compelled to refuse.

The lady was much vexed by the refusal.

"You may remember, madame," timidly remarked the manager, "that I have sent you twelve boxes during the last three months."

"Yes," she promptly replied, with a sneer, "and every one of them side boxes."

There is no pleasing some people.

A fidgety old fellow, who had been several times disappointed, at length found a cook who just suited his palate to a nicety.

"Really, Mary," said he, after making an excellent meal, "you possess talent. Your old master ought to have appreciated you. I suppose he liked your cooking just as much as I do?"

"I expect, so, sir; for he died through it."

A cabman, the other day, was hailed by a fare, and told to drive as rapidly as possible to the Charing-cross station, as time was of the greatest importance.

On arriving at the station, the cabman having driven at top speed, the gentleman handed him his exact fare.

Cabby remonstrated, but without avail. He was getting a little excited over it, when the gentleman coolly interposed—

"Give me your ticket. I am an officer of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and I have a great mind to summon you for cruelly over-driving your horse."

Apropos of milk adulteration, that is a good story of Scribe, the French poet, who hired a house in the country to pass the summer. As soon as he was fairly installed in it, he went in search of a farmer who had a milch cow. Having found one, he stated his want.

"My good man, my servant will come every morning to buy a pint of milk."

"Very well, it is eight sous."

"But I want pure milk, very pure."

"In that case it is ten sous."

"You will milk in the presence of my servant."

"Oh, then, it will be fifteen sous."

The following is not a bad story of the "Wizard of the North":—

Sir Walter Scott was, in one of his walks, leaning on the arm of his faithful attendant, Tom Purdie. Tom said—

"They are fine novels of yours, Sir Walter; they are just invaluable to me."

"I am glad to hear it, Tom."

"Yes, sir; for when I have been out all day hard at work, and come home very tired, and take up one of your novels, I'm asleep directly."

The conceit is often taken out of people who think themselves famous. Thackeray, when speaking about fame, would frequently tell the following anecdote:—

When at dinner one day, he heard one waiter say to another—

"Do you know who that is?"

"No," was the answer.

"That's the celebrated Mr. Thackeray."

"What's he done?"

"Blessed if I know," was the reply.

Two Englishmen visiting Paris, and not being able to get roast beef to their satisfaction, resolved not to be poisoned with French "slops" and manufactured dishes. Here is their bill for one morning:—"Two sodas, three brandies, two teas, two coffees, eight poached eggs, ham, two more teas, two coffees, broiled ham, one tea, eight eggs, more ham, and a packet of cigarettes." "*Jolis estomacs,*" remarks the newspaper which gives the information.

At a recent *soirée* largely attended by professional men, a magistrate introduced a young practitioner to Dr. P——, who holds an important official appointment.

"Ah," remarked Dr. P—— afterwards to the magistrate, "your friend is a most agreeable young man. He has a numerous *clientèle*, too. I know that by the number of deaths among his patients!"

The simplicity of affection. Two little children at play in Kensington Gardens:—

"I wish I were grown up to be a woman, don't you?"

"No; I should always like to be little."

"Why?"

"Because I should always have a mamma and papa then."

A doctor of the old school, wearing a broad-brimmed hat and a white cravat, and carrying an ivory-handled cane, went to pay a last visit to an old friend who was on the verge of death. He approached the bed, looked at the dying man, and then turned sadly away. The poor man's wife gave the doctor an inquiring glance, to which he responded by a shake of the head, and then went to the door.

Suddenly there was a loud laugh behind him. Turning back, and walking straight up to the woman, who was already chuckling at being a widow, he fiercely exclaimed—

"Ah, madam, not so fast. There is hope yet."

An attorney's clerk, somewhat foppish and still more indiscreet, made a slip in conversation with his principal. The latter drew his attention to it, and the clerk apologized.

"I have lost," said he, "an excellent opportunity of holding my tongue."

"Never mind," remarked the attorney, quietly, "you'll have plenty of chances yet."

An ingenious young lady suggests that Rustchuk is the best word to sneeze on, and Hunyadi Yanos for a yawn.

I see it announced in the military news from Aldershot that Sir Thomas Steele's army corps operated against a skeleton force on the Fox Hills. Surely we are getting enough carnage in the news from the East without giving to our peaceful reviews a name so suggestive of the grizzly bones of grim death.

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

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The War Correspondent.

BY THE WANDERING JEW.

MEM. TO EDITOR.

I'VE got nothing else to write about, so I must go it from in here. 'Pon my soul, it's too bad; it is indeed. You might have stirred that Nineveh bull Layard up, and got me out by now. Catch me coming out again for you if I'm to be treated like this. Now, mind, stupid—this IS NOT to go in. By the way, I apologize for that word "stupid." Couldn't help it, really. It's the iron entering into my soul. Now for my letter for publication.

Before Whisky-Lagra.

My letters have lately been short, and to this moment I am in doubt as to whether they have been received, for the communications have been cut, and so has everything else; while, to add to the cup of my bitterness, I have been taken prisoner by the cruel Cossacks, and cast into a loathsome dungeon, where I drink nothing but filthy water, and eat nothing but the blackest and most abominable bread, composed of equal parts of bad flour and blackbeetles, ground up small.

Let me tell you how it was.

Feeling bound to do my best for your journal, I attached myself, as you know, to the staff of Rublu Pacha, a gentleman of British extraction, and, instead of keeping back and gathering such crumbs as I could pick up here and there, I have placed myself in the forefront of the battle—of all the battles, I may say—and bitten huge pieces out of the warlike loaf to send to you, at the risk of my life, or, at the lowest computation, at the danger of being severely wounded.

I was at the gallant defence of Plevna, where the Muscovite was defeated; and as soon as that place was safe, I killed three horses in galloping to rejoin Rublu Pacha, who, with his men, had fallen back to fortify the Shipka Pass against the advancing Russians; and there we were attacked in the front by Prince Mirska, and in the rear by General Gourko, who sneaked through the Hainkoi Pass like a coward, and fell upon us behind.

I was in the thick of the fight, and—do not blame me—I grew so excited by the cowardly behaviour of the Russians—we were only two to one—that I could stand it no longer, but, seizing the rifle of an unfortunate Nizam who fell dead at my feet, I threw his pouch over my shoulder, and fought hard and fast with these Turks for their fatherland, which they stole from somebody else.

It is a wonderful thing the blood-fury that comes upon a man in such a scene as the struggle in the Shipka Pass, where the Russians came upon us like a wave upon the shore, but only to be beaten back; for the shore bristled with steel points, upon which the wave broke, and rolled away.

A fearful scene, and one which I recall now with horror as I think of the times I thrust my bayonet-armed rifle against the breast of a fierce Russian, felt the thin blade glide through him, and then drew it back. The blood spurted from a thousand wounds upon the devoted band of Turks who defended the

pass, till you could not tell which was fez and which was not.

Rublu Pacha behaved like a hero, waving that glistening scimitar of his around his head; and wherever it waved, the Muscovite heads fell like ears of corn before the reaper.

Our men—I beg pardon—his men were staunch to a degree, and fought magnificently; but what could we do with people who had not a particle of honour in their composition? I, sir, was at our autumn manoeuvres, and knew perfectly well when a corps is beaten. Again and again I have seen his Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge gallop up to a regiment, and tell it that it was whopped, when it had to retire.

Well, sir, these stupid, idiotic Russians were beaten twenty times over—I say I beat them—we beat them; but the ignorant brutes would not see it, and kept on firing and charging in the most ridiculous way. Hundreds of them lay dead and wounded among the rocks of the pass; but they didn't care a bit, but walked over them in the most scandalous way.

I turned to Rublu, and said to him—

"We must stop this carnage."

"We must, dear boy, we must," he replied. "I have been thinking so for some time."

"The ignorant Russian pigs will keep coming on to be bayoneted," I cried, raising my voice so as to be heard above the din and riot of the engagement.

For there were rocks and piled-up masses of stone high above us, from which the shouts and cries re-echoed, while the manner in which the shots were heard over and over again made the Russians charge the Turks with having repeating rifles, which was a mistake.

Well, sir, fighting for you like a common soldier, unhurt myself, though my garments were drenched with Russian blood, I helped again and again to drive these foolish serf-like creatures back, till Rublu turned to me, and placing his lips to my ear—

"Solomon," he shouted, "I have not the heart to kill any more of these poor wretches. I shall be held up to posterity as a Bulgarian atrocity sort of fellow."

"But these men are armed," I said, as our withering fire was kept on.

"True," he replied, "but we are killing far too many. My conscience won't let me do any more."

"Well, it is too bad," I replied; "poor wretches, they have no brains."

"Oh, yes, they have," he said, pointing to one fallen enemy.

I shuddered, and moved away; when the word being given, we retired from the field—I mean the pass—in excellent order, firing volleys at the absurd unsoldierly wretches who persisted in following us up; while, as if their proceedings had not been sufficiently idiotic, we encountered at the end of a few miles, while passing through devious ravines, the forces of General Gourko, who had marched round through the Hainkoi Pass.

Well, sir, as a gentle, humane man, Rublu Pacha, scorning to slaughter more of the sheep-like creatures, turned his front; and then if the cowardly scoundrels did not attack us in the rear!

They saw we did not want to fight them—that, in fact, we wished to spare their wretched lives; but they were not satisfied, they would come on; and come on they did furiously—so furiously that our poor fellows were shot down in all directions, and all through their tender-heartedness towards their foes.

We were separated and scattered. I saw Rublu with his sheathed sword in one hand, and his fez in the other, running like the wind—when it don't blow fast—and a Cossack, mounted on a wretched Tartar pony, after him, prodding him with a spear, so that at every touch he gave a tremendous bound. Then they disappeared round a corner amongst the rocks, and I had to look out for myself, for a dozen Cossacks caught sight of me as I went behind a rock to get my breath, and the next minute I became aware of the fact that they had divided into two parties, and six were coming round one side of the rock, and six round the other.

It was a good-sized rock, about as big as the Langham Hotel, and I thought I should have time to rest a little before endeavouring to help Rublu Pacha to rally our forces; but no, sir, no—the Cossacks came careering round on their wretched, spavined, broken-kneed Tartar ponies, and all I could do was to creep into a crevice and wait, in the hope that they would go by.

Not they, sir; for my star was not in the ascendant. Like the moss troopers of old, they came “pricking” round, shouting to one another; and prick they did in a horribly literal manner—one wretch thrusting his lance into the crevice where I was, and shouting—

“*Bon regnios—bon regnios,*” which, being interpreted, means—“Here he is—here he is.”

Well, sir, as his next thrust would have skewered me like a partridge—and, by the way, mind this, I must be back in time for the partridge shooting—I say, sir, as his next thrust would have skewered me like a bird, I thought I’d repeat history, and, like the celebrated ‘coon of the Yankee story, I shouted to him in a jocular way—

“Don’t shoot: I’ll come down.”

So, just in time, I crept out, and stood forth on the rocky plain, the cynosure of neighbouring eyes, and the point from which a dozen lances radiated like the spokes of a wheel from the nave.

If I were in the humour for joking, what puns I might make here about having the knave, the lances, the staves, and the Cossacks round me in a ring, the felloes—fellow, don’t you see? But I have not the heart to joke, for though we formed a wheel, it was more woe than weal, and I felt very low-spirited as I expected each breath I drew to be my last.

“Rah—Rah—Rah!” they burst out all at once.

And from their excited words I gathered “Sir Arnold Kemball—Sir Arnold Kemball, English general.”

I felt a cold shudder pass through me, for all the world as if I were having steel substituted for spinal marrow. For in an instant I knew what it all meant—the wretches took me for the British attaché, whom they had got it into their stupid heads was directing the Turkish forces, and on whose head goodness knows how many roubles were set.

Now, nothing can better show the ridiculous nature of the Russians than this. Sir Arnold Kemball was with the troops about Erzeroum, and we were on the southern slope of the Balkans.

However, they think that we are almost ubiquitous, and Sir Arnold Kemball could have been telegraphed from one place to the other in a few minutes; and all I could say to the effect that I was not Sir Arnold but *the* Solomon had no effect. They considered that I was Kemball Pacha, and they began a consultation directly as to how much of me it would be advisable to take into their camp.

It was hot; they were weary; their horses were slight; and more than one of them suggested, in spite of my objections, that all that was necessary was for them to take my head—one wretch playfully tying my two long drooping locks of beard together in a knot, to show how easily the head would have hung at his saddle-bow from a kind of pommeil that is there for hanging on kitchen utensils and some of the sundries without which no Cossack travels.

I protested, I stormed, I will not say I did not swear, but all in vain.

“It’s all right, *barin*,” the leader kept saying to me—“it’s all right, brother. We wanted to capture you.”

Well, of course it was all right for him, but it was no joke for me, and this will give you some idea of the difficulties to which a newspaper Correspondent is exposed. You can easily understand how, in such a hot land, the perspiration ran down into my boots, and how I mentally began to regret that I had not made my will.

To my great joy, just as I felt that all was over, they contented themselves with making me a prisoner, and I was marched off, congratulating myself that it was I and not Sir Arnold Kemball who was compelled to submit to such indignities as those from which I suffer. For I would not that an English general should be so treated for the world.

Fancy being poked up with a lance point every now and then, like a bullock going to the cattle market at Islington, and being treated as if one’s life was not worth a toss. Ah, sir, a Correspondent’s life is anything but the jolly affair some people think it.

But there, if we can’t have any other truces, a truce to complaining. I was brought on to —, and there, after scant courtesy, thrust into a foul dungeon; and here, in spite of all remonstrances, I am trying very hard to live, and wondering whether these lines will ever reach your hands. If they do not, speak gently of me and say to your readers, “He was a brave man was Solomon, and he died as a brave man should.”

As I can say no more about what goes on outside, I may as well tell you what goes on in.

Rats do, and no mistake; they go on terribly. The nasty little wretches, as there is no corn left in the place, want to eat me; they have evidently made up their minds to do it, and have nibbled me more than once. But as I protested loudly, and would not stand it, kicking up behind and before, after the fashion of the celebrated old Joe, of negro minstrelsy, they scuffle off to their holes with the loss of a few of their number.

You see by the cheerfulness of my allusions how well I keep up my spirits, and this, mind, on black-beetle bread, and water that I filter through a piece of the tail of my coat, it is so full of tadpoles and other unpleasant water abominations.

My great difficulty with the rats has been that I have had no weapon with which to kill them, after even my boots have been taken away. If I kick at the little savages, they bite my toes; if I slap at them, they bite my fingers; so I have been driven to lying quietly down on my side, and then, when the swarm have come out of their holes to the attack, rolling over them.

This plan, in one night, enabled me to smother nine, though not until they had bitten me.

Their dead bodies, however, supplied me with a weapon; for, tearing and twisting my neckerchief, I wove into it the tails of the nine rats, with the result that their bodies hung like a bunch of grapes from the stout-twisted thong of silk which formed the handle, and with these nine bodies I flog about and kill their compatriots by scores, reserving the heaviest to make fresh rat scourges, and throwing the others away for their brethren to devour; and this they do—the cannibals—without salt.

This in a whisper—I may be driven to eating them, unless my food supplies come in better, for this is awful work. By the way, your Turkish rat is a rat, and no mistake. He is an atrocious beast, and where he lays hold, there he sticks till you kill him.

And now, sir, I am about to direct this piece of written linen, and to throw it out of the window. If I am no more very shortly, do not let the printers keep the scrap, with its illegible writing, but have it framed in remembrance of your unfortunate Correspondent.

But there, you will send help, I am sure, to rescue the unfortunate.

SOLOMON.

P.S.—I am that hungry, that a piece of leather would be a blessing; and if some one don't soon bring me something to eat, I am sorry for the rats, that's all.

Tit-Bits from Helen's Babies.

CHAPTER I.

THE first cause, so far as it can be determined, of the existence of this tale may be found in the following letter, written by my only married sister, and received by me, Harry Burton, salesman of white goods, bachelor, aged twenty-eight, and received just as I was trying to decide where I should spend a fortnight's vacation:—

"Hillcrest, June 15, 1875.

"DEAR HARRY—Remembering that you are always complaining that you never have a chance to read, and knowing that you won't get it this summer, if you spend your vacation among people of your own set, I write to ask you to come up here. I admit that I am not wholly disinterested in inviting you. The truth is, Tom and I are invited to spend a fortnight with my old schoolmate, Alice Wayne, who, you know, is the dearest girl in the world, though you didn't obey me and marry her before Frank

Wayne appeared. Well, we're dying to go, for Alice and Frank live in splendid style; but, as they haven't included our children in their invitation, and have no children of their own, we must leave Budge and Toddie at home. I've no doubt they'll be perfectly safe, for my girl is a jewel, and devoted to the children; but I would feel a great deal easier if there was a man in the house. Besides, there's the silver, and burglars are less likely to break into a house where there's a savage-looking man. (Never mind about thanking me for the compliment.) If you'll only come up, my mind will be completely at rest. The children won't give you the slightest trouble; they're the best children in the world—everybody says so.

"Tom has plenty of cigars, I know, for the money I should have had for a new suit went to pay his cigar-man. He has some new claret too, that he goes into ecstasies over, though I can't tell it from the vilest black ink, except by the colour. Our horses are in splendid condition, and so is the garden—you see, I don't forget your old passion for flowers. And, last and best, there never were so many handsome girls at Hillcrest as there are among the summer boarders already here; the girls you are already acquainted with here will see that you meet all the newer acquisitions.

"Reply by telegraph right away. Of course you'll say 'Yes.'—In great haste, your loving

"SISTER HELEN.

"P.S.—You shall have your own chamber; it catches every breeze, and commands the finest views. The children's room communicates with it; so if anything should happen to the darlings at night, you'd be sure to hear them."

Three days later I made the hour and a half trip between New York and Hillcrest, and hired a hackman to drive me over to Tom's. Half a mile from my brother-in-law's residence, our horses shied violently, and the driver, after talking freely to them, turned to me, and remarked—

"That was one of the 'Imps.'"

"What was?" I asked.

"That little cuss that scared the hosses. There he is now, holdin' up that piece of brushwood. 'Twould be just like his cheek, now, to ask me to let him ride. Here he comes, runnin'. Wonder where t'other is? They most generally travel together. We call 'em the Imps, about these parts, because they're so uncommon likely at mischief. Always skeerin' hosses, or chasin' cows, or frightenin' chickens. Nice enough father and mother, too—queer, how young ones do turn out!"

As he spoke, the offending youth came panting beside our carriage, and in a very dirty sailor suit, and under a broad-brimmed straw hat, with one stocking about his ankle, and two shoes averaging about two buttons each, I recognized my nephew, Budge! About the same time there emerged from the bushes by the roadside a smaller boy, in a green gingham dress, a ruffle which might once have been white, dirty stockings, blue slippers worn through at the toes, and an old-fashioned straw turban. Thrusting into the dust of the road a branch from a bush, and shouting "Here's my grass-cutter?" he ran towards us.

When he paused, and the dust had somewhat sub-

sided, I beheld the unmistakable lineaments of the child Toddie.

"They're—my nephews," I gasped.

"What!" exclaimed the driver. "By gracious. I forgot you were going to Colonel Lawrence's. I didn't tell anything but the truth about 'em, though; they're smart enough, an' good enough, as boys go; but they'll never die of the complaint that children has in Sunday-school books."

"Budge," said I, with all the sternness that I could command, "do you know me?"

The searching eyes of the embryo prophet and philanthropist scanned me for a moment, then their owner replied—

"Yes, you're Uncle Harry. Did you bring us anything?"

"Bring us anything?" echoed Toddie.

"I wish I could have brought you some big whippings," said I, with great severity of manner, "for behaving so badly. Get into this carriage."

"Come on, Tod," shouted Budge, although Toddie's farther ear was not a yard from Budge's mouth.

"Uncle Harry's going to take us riding."

"Going to take us riding," echoed Toddie, with the air of one in a reverie. Both the echo and the reverie I soon learned were characteristics of Toddie.

As they clambered into the carriage, I noticed that each one carried a very dirty towel, knotted in the centre into what is known as a slip-noose knot, drawn very tight. After some moments of disgusted contemplation of these rags, without being in the least able to comprehend their purpose, I asked Budge what those towels were for.

"They're not towels—they're dollies," promptly answered my nephew.

"Goodness!" I exclaimed. "I should think your mother could buy you respectable dolls, and not let you appear in public with those loathsome rags."

"We don't like buyed dollies," explained Budge. "These dollies is lovely; mine's name is Mary, an' Toddie's is Marfa."

"Oh, Martha, you mean?"

"Yes, Marfa, that's what I say. Toddie's dolly's got brown eyes, an' my dolly's got blue eyes."

"I want to shee yours watch," remarked Toddie, snatching at my chain, and rolling into my lap.

"Oh—oo—ee, so do I," shouted Budge, hastening to occupy one knee, and *in transitu* wiping his shoes on my trousers and the skirts of my coat. Each Imp put an arm about me to steady himself, as I produced my three-hundred dollar time-keeper, and showed them the dial.

"I want to see the wheels go round," said Budge.

"Want to shee wheels go wound," echoed Toddie.

"No; I can't open my watch where there's so much dust," I said.

"What for?" inquired Budge.

"Want to shee wheels go wound," repeated Toddie.

"The dust gets inside the watch and spoils it," I explained.

"Want to shee the wheels go wound," said Toddie, once more.

"I tell you I can't, Toddie," said I, with considerable asperity. "Dust spoils watches."

The innocent grey eyes looked up wonderingly,

the dirty but pretty lips parted slightly, and Toddie murmured—

"Want to shee the wheels go wound."

I abruptly closed my watch, and put it into my pocket. Instantly Toddie's lower lip commenced to turn outward, and continued to do so until I seriously feared the bony portion of his chin would be exposed to view. Then his lower jaw dropped, and he cried—

"Ah—h—h—h—h—h—h—want—to—shee—the wheels—go wou—ound."

"Charles" (Charles is his baptismal name)—"Charles," I exclaimed, with some anger, "stop that noise this instant! Do you hear me?"

"Yes—oo—oo—oo—ahoo—ahoo."

"Then stop it."

"Wants to shee—"

"Toddie, I've got some candy in my trunk, but I won't give you a bit if you don't stop that infernal noise."

"Well, I wants to shee wheels go wound. Ah—ah—h—h—h—h!"

"Toddie, dear, don't cry so. Here's some ladies coming in a carriage: you wouldn't let *them* see you crying, would you? You shall see the wheels go round as soon as we get home."

A carriage containing a couple of ladies was rapidly approaching, as Toddie again raised his voice.

"Ah—h—h—wants to shee wheels—"

Madly I snatched my watch from my pocket, opened the case, and exposed the works to view. The other carriage was meeting ours, and I dropped my head to avoid meeting the glance of the unknown occupants; for my few moments of contact with my dreadful nephews had made me feel inexpressibly unneat.

Suddenly the carriage with the ladies stopped. I heard my own name spoken, and raising my head quickly (encountering Budge's bullet-head *en route*, to the serious disarrangement of my hat), I looked into the other carriage. There, erect, fresh, neat, composed, bright-eyed, fair-faced, smiling and observant—she would have been all this, even if the angel of the resurrection had just sounded his dreadful trump—sat Miss Alice Mayton, a lady whom, for about a year, I had been adoring from afar.

"When did you arrive, Mr. Burton?" she asked, "and how long have you been officiating as child's companion? You're certainly a happy-looking trio—so unconventional. I hate to see children all dressed up and stiff as little mannikins, when they go out to ride. And you look as if you'd been having such a good time with them."

"I—I assure you, Miss Mayton," said I, "that my experience has been the exact reverse of a pleasant one. If King Herod were yet alive, I'd volunteer as an executioner, and engage to deliver two interesting corpses at a moment's notice."

"You dreadful wretch!" exclaimed the lady. "Mother, let me make you acquainted with Mr. Burton—Helen Lawrence's brother. How is your sister, Mr. Burton?"

"I don't know," I replied; "she has gone with her husband on a fortnight's visit to Captain and Mrs. Wayne, and I've been silly enough to promise to have an eye to the place while they're away."

"Why, how delightful!" exclaimed Miss Mayton. "Such horses! Such flowers! Such a cook!"

"And such children," said I, glaring suggestively at the Imps, and rescuing from Toddie a handkerchief which he had extracted from my pocket, and was waving to the breeze.

"Why, they're the best children in the world. Helen told me so the first time I met her this season. Children will be children, you know. We had three little cousins with us last summer, and I'm sure they made me look years older than I really am."

"How young you must be, then, Miss Mayton!" said I.

"Of course you'll call," said Miss Mayton, as her carriage started.

"Uncle Harry," said Budge, "do you know how to make whistles?"

"Ucken Hawwy," muttered Toddie, "does you love dat lady?"

"No, Toddie, of course not."

"Then you's baddy man, an' de Lord won't let you go to heaven if you don't love peoples."

"Yes, Budge," I answered, hastily, "I do know how to make whistles, and you shall have one."

"Lord don't like mans that don't like peoples," reiterated Toddie.

"All right, Toddie," said I.

At the supper table Budge and Toddie appeared cleanly clothed and in their rightful faces. Budge seated himself at the table; Toddie pushed back his high chair, climbed into it, and shouted—

"Put my legs under ze tabo."

Rightfully construing this remark as a request to be seated to the table, I fulfilled his desire. The girl poured tea for me and milk for the children, and retired. I resignedly rapped on the table, bowed my head, said, "For what we are about to receive, the Lord make us truly thankful," and asked Budge whether he ate bread or biscuit.

"Why, we aint asked no blessin' yet," said he.

"Yes, I did, Budge," said I. "Didn't you hear me?"

"Do you mean what you said just now?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I don't think that was no blessin' at all. Papa never says that kind of blessin'."

"What does papa say, may I ask?" I inquired, with becoming meekness.

"Why, papa says, 'Our Father, we thank Thee for this food; mercifully remember with us all the hungry and needy to-day, for Christ's sake, Amen.' That's what he says."

"It means the same thing, Budge."

"I don't think it does; and Toddie didn't have no to say his blessin'. I don't think the Lord 'll like it if you do it that way."

"Yes, He will, old boy; He knows what people mean."

"Well, how can He tell what Toddie means if Toddie can't say anything?"

"Wantsh to shay my blessin'," whined Todie.

It was enough; my singular encounter with Toddie had taught me to respect the young gentleman's force of character. So again I bowed my head, and repeated what Budge had reported as "papa's

blessin'," Budge kindly prompting me where my memory failed. The moment I began, Toddie commenced to jabber rapidly and aloud, and the instant the "Amen" was pronounced, he raised his head and remarked, with evident satisfaction—

"I shed my blessin' two timesh."

And Budge said gravely—

"Now I guess we're all right."

The Yellow Diamond.

CHAPTER I.

I SHALL never forget that night when the diamond was brought home. It belonged to Mr. Richard Dacre, who had recently returned from the East Indies, fabulously rich. In the first place, he had deposited the jewel in one of the New York banks; but feeling naturally eager to display his treasure, he finally decided to bring it to Fair Oaks.

A word of explanation just here. Fair Oaks was the country seat of Mrs. General Dacre, a blooming young widow of twenty-three. Richard Dacre was her brother-in-law. She had a step-daughter, Eloise, of about her own age. My brother Guy and myself were guests invited to meet the East Indian, and help reconcile him to his native land.

It was past seven o'clock when Mr. Dacre arrived with the diamond. After the early tea was over, he led the way to a private study in the rear of the parlours, bidding us all to follow.

"You shall see my precious treasure, my queen of sparklers," cried he, delightedly. "Are we secure from interruption?"

Mrs. Dacre closed the door, carefully locking it.

"Yes," returned she, coming forward into the glow of the lamplight. "The servants were not likely to come this way, in any event."

She paused beside the table, looking sweet and innocent as any saint, with her downcast eyes of the true Irish blue, her slight petite figure, blonde complexion, and profusion of yellow hair with the glint of gold upon it. Eloise stood near, darker, graver, more matured, though younger. Their faces made a charming contrast. While I was looking at the two, Guy touched my hand.

"Isn't she charming, Barton?" he whispered, in an intense tone.

"Which? Mrs. Dacre?"

"Of course. What do I care for jewels? All the diamonds in the world could not outrival the sparkle of her blue eyes, the glint of her hair."

I looked at him in puzzled amaze. He seemed feverish and excited. He had spoken with singular impetuosity. What did it mean? Had he lost his senses in admiration of our lovely hostess?

Mr. Richard's voice (Guy and I had fallen into the habit of calling him "Mr. Richard") broke in upon my meditations.

"Here is my diamond," he exclaimed, unbuckling a leathern casket from his belt. "You shall see for yourselves if it is not a prince's ransom."

He opened the case, and lifted from the cushion where it lay the priceless atom, resting it against some dark groundwork or other. We gathered round the table, and just at that instant the lamp-

light touched the jewel, making it blaze and flare up of a sudden, and send off rays of dazzling brilliancy like a mimic sun.

There was a chorus of cries.

"Wonderful!" said Eloise, with a long-drawn breath.

"Beautiful!" murmured Mrs. Dacre.

"A rare gem!" exclaimed Guy.

It deserved all their commendations. The diamond was wonderfully large and brilliant. It lay there ceaselessly flickering, darkening and lightening, like a thing of life. It was as if sun and moon had blended floating atoms of their richness and mellowness into something tangible—something to shine and dazzle and bewilder.

"Where did you find such a treasure?" asked Eloise.

Mr. Richard's swarthy cheeks flushed a little.

"It belonged to one of the dignitaries over the water," he answered, evasively; "a fierce, fiery fellow who loved it as he did his life, and whose blood has stained it more than once. Those natives worship such things as if they were gods. His breath was ebbing when he consented to give it up. But I had to force it from his clenched hand at last."

Eloise shuddered. A vague fear crossed her mind, perhaps, that there might be something darker and more disagreeable behind the story her uncle had told.

"It must be of almost incalculable value," said Mrs. Dacre.

"Very likely its equal is not in all the world. It's a fortune in itself. Its price would purchase half the county. It would make millionaires of us all."

I saw Guy start suddenly. An eager, greedy look came into his hazel eyes. He evidently believed every word of this exaggerated declaration. Perhaps he was thinking of his own poverty, and what that jewel could do for him.

"What will you do with it?" asked Mrs. Dacre.

"Keep it as an heirloom, perhaps—sell it, possibly. I have not determined."

Mrs. Dacre's sweet lips began to quiver all at once.

"Are you not afraid to carry anything so valuable upon your person?" she cried, with a very pretty air of concern. "You might be robbed and murdered."

"Humph," muttered the East Indian. "I shall return it to the bank within a day or two. Nobody knows it is in the house save ourselves. I shall sleep with it under my pillow to-night."

The diamond was returned to its case. After a little we fell into constrained chat upon other topics. For my own part, I was restless and uneasy. The more I reflected, the more restless did I become. The thought that anything so valuable was in the house unnerved me somehow. There was no telling what disreputable persons had seen Mr. Richard take the jewel from the bank. It would be an easy matter to follow him to Fair Oaks, and lie in wait until the house was quiet.

When bed-time came round, my fears were active as ever. They beset me more and more, despite every effort to shake them off. Finally, when Mr. Richard went to light his bed-room candle by the hall lamp, I went out to him.

"You are sure," I said, "that nobody followed you here from the city?"

He turned upon me with a careless laugh.

"Sure enough," he answered.

"My mind is not at rest about that diamond. Take my advice, and do not sleep with it under your pillow, as you intended. Thieves are sure to look there first, of all places. Hide it somewhere else."

My earnestness was not without its effect. He did not "pooh" at me, as I had half-expected. Instead, after a moment's reflection, he returned—

"Your idea is a good one, Barton. I'll put my jewel in that escritoir that stands in the ante-room just outside my door. I can sleep with the key of the escritoir under my pillow if I wish."

He spoke lightly at the last.

"I see no objection to that," was my answer.

Turning away, I caught a glimpse of Guy and Mrs. Dacre in an angle near the study. I could almost have sworn that he had snatched a kiss from the sweet, pouting lips a moment previously. At any rate, he looked disconcerted at sight of me, while our fair hostess blushed furiously.

"I wonder if they overheard what Mr. Richard was saying to me?" I thought. "They were near enough."

It did not matter, as I knew. So, after going in to say good night to Eloise, and holding the dear girl's hand in mine a much longer time than was necessary, I went upstairs, followed by Mr. Richard, and lingered long enough with him to be sure he deposited the diamond in the escritoir. I then went along the corridor to my own chamber, which was situated in the other wing.

While I sat thoughtfully by an open window, puffing a cigar, Guy came in. He still looked flushed, restless, excited, and took half a dozen impatient turns backward and forward in the room before he could make up his mind to take a chair by my side.

"What ails you, Guy?" I asked.

"Nothing," with a short, odd laugh.

He took the cigar I offered, and began to smoke furiously. His excitement did not seem to abate. After a long silence, he broke out suddenly:

"Hang it, Barton, but it's confoundedly inconvenient to be poor!"

"Happiness does not depend upon riches."

"I don't believe that," said he, angrily. "Uncle Ben saw fit to make you heir to his thousands, and so you don't know the inconveniences of poverty. But I am in a different box. Don't tell me—I know better! A poor man can't be happy; it isn't in the bond. Now, if I were a rich man, happiness would be ready made for me."

"What do you mean?" I asked, staring at him stupidly.

He rose up, dashing the cigar out of the window.

"This is what I mean," he cried, vehemently. "I love Clarice with all my heart. She would marry me if I were not a poor man."

"Mrs. Dacre?"

"Yes—why not? She is young enough and pretty enough, goodness knows. And I don't imagine her grief for the old general is inconsolable. If I were

rich enough, and you didn't stand in the way, I could marry her to-morrow."

He spoke with singular impetuosity.

"I stand in your way?" I echoed.

"Aye," he sneered. "Haven't you seen what an admiration Clarice has for your handsome face? She likes the idea of your bank stock and coupon bonds, too. The old general left nearly everything to Eloise, you know. She wouldn't object to an eligible *parti* like yourself. Oh, no!"

"Guy, what are you saying?" I exclaimed, more and more deeply amazed. "You shall not speak of Mrs. Dacre in that way. The innocent child! Why should she care for me or my money?"

His lip curled contemptuously.

"We won't talk of her, then, brother Barton. I'm not jealous of you. Pretty Eloise has snared you too thoroughly. But I *would* like to be a millionaire, though. Only to think, Barton, that diamond of Mr. Richard's, that precious, sparkling atom you might easily hold under the ball of your thumb, would make my fortune! Only think of it!"

He was pacing the floor again, a dark, shifting look I did not like in his eyes. He paused every now and then, when something like a muttered imprecation would fall from his lips. My poor brother —what had come over him?

"Go to bed, Guy," I said at last. "You are not yourself to-night. In the morning you will carry a cooler head on your shoulders."

He turned, going away with a word. But for more than an hour thereafter I heard the steady tramp, tramp as he moved backward and forward in his own chamber, which was on the opposite side of the corridor.

I must have fallen into an uneasy slumber soon after the sounds ceased. I don't know how long I slept, but I awoke suddenly, to find myself sitting bolt upright in the bed. Singularly enough, the premonition of ill that had weighed upon my spirits all the evening was then heavier than ever with the first moment of returned consciousness.

I sat very quiet. After a brief lapse of time, Guy's door creaked slightly. Then I heard stealthy footsteps stealing along the hall. I was sure it must be his tread. The truth did not occur to me for some seconds, and then it came with stunning force—Guy intended to steal the diamond!

Leaping from the bed, I hurried on my clothes as fast as possible. My first care was to peer into Guy's room. There was a moon that night, but clouds obscured it, and the chamber was quite dark. I went to the bedside, and ran my hand over it. It was empty! This fact confirmed my conjectures, for what could call Guy from his couch at that hour of the night unless it was to get the jewel into his possession?

He was desperate enough for such a deed. Perhaps he had even been resolving it while conversing with me before he went to bed. I shuddered when I thought how excited he had appeared.

I was not sure whether he knew the diamond was in the escritoir or not, but I hurried to the ante-room, pausing in the corridor outside the door, which stood slightly ajar. A faint, almost inaudible movement could be distinguished within. I stood as if

spell-bound for some seconds. Then, something brushed past me in the darkness. I heard a soft, rustling sound, and rapid though suppressed breathing. A human form was faintly outlined against the dark shadows that hovered in the corridor, and less than three feet away!

Whose was it? I had no time to think, and an awful dread was tugging at my heart. Acting on the impulse of the moment, I suddenly grasped the figure by the arm. It was a woman's silk sleeve with which my hand came in contact!

No outcry was made, though I had expected that. I dragged the resisting figure along the corridor to the great bay window which lighted it from the end. Just then the moon dipped clear of the rift of clouds, shining out bright and serene. I turned to look at my captive.

"Eloise!" I gasped.

She was ghastly pale. I could see that she shivered in the moonlight. She shrank away from me with an expression on her face I could not interpret.

"How came you here?"

"Hush!" she cried, in a startled whisper. "Don't betray yourself. I never shall!"

What did she mean? It was no time to discover. I was afraid every moment that Guy would come out of the ante-room, and she would thus learn of the crime he had been tempted to commit.

"Go back to your chamber," I said. "You should not be wandering about the house at this hour. Go back, Eloise."

The incongruity of this address did not strike either of us at the time. She looked at me steadily a moment, as if she would have read my very soul. Then she turned away, wringing her hands.

"I will go," she moaned. "May God forgive and keep you, Barton Devonshire."

This singular form of address puzzled me more than anything that had gone before it. But she slipped away, just avoiding my detaining hand, and glided, noiselessly and ghost-like, along the corridor.

I felt giddy and sick at heart. But the thought of Guy nerved me again. The moon swept into a second bank of clouds just as I started to seek him. The passage seemed darker and gloomier than before. I could barely grope my way. Perhaps the half-realized pain at my heart had something to do with it.

This time I pushed open the ante-room door without a moment's hesitation. There was a muttered curse, and somebody rose up suddenly from the floor, flashing the light of a dark lantern full upon me. Though nearly blinded by the glare, I strode forward.

"Guy," I whispered, hoarsely, "why are you here?"

An angry cry fell from his lips as he advanced into the light. His face was ashen pale. In one hand he dangled a bunch of keys, with which he had been attempting to force the lock of the escritoir upon the floor. He looked baffled and infuriated. He was stripped to the waist, and for some seconds stood glaring at me with a ferocious gleam in his eyes, as if tempted to close with me in a deadly struggle. I caught hold of his wrist.

"Guy, come back with me!" I cried. "You shall come!"

He attempted to shake me off.

"Spy!" he hissed, "why did you follow me?"

"To save you from the consequences of a crime - a terrible crime that would blight all your future life."

He shuddered at that, and began to tremble. His features worked convulsively, as if he had experienced a severe mental strain. The perspiration stood in great drops on his brow. I saw my advantage, and followed it up.

"Come back with me," I pleaded. "It is not too late." For I knew he had not secured the jewel then. He had found trouble in fitting a key, perhaps. "Come back. I ask it for your sake, and for our dead mother's."

Something like a strangled sob burst from him. He followed me from the room, and I carefully closed the door behind us. We had heard no stir in Mr. Richard's room, and the rest of the house was just as quiet. We stole along the corridor.

"It was for her sake," I heard Guy mutter. "God knows I could have borne poverty by myself. I wanted the diamond for her."

The plaintive cry touched my heart, but I would not show how deeply it affected me.

"Wheré did you find that lantern?" I asked, almost harshly.

"It hung on a peg in the corridor."

I restored it to the place from which he had taken it. When we reached his chamber door, I signed for him to go in. He hesitated.

"Barton," he cried, suddenly, "will you not say God bless you?"

I could not see his face, but his voice sounded harsh and broken. He held out his hand, and I wrung it warmly.

"May God bless you, Guy, and give you strength to overcome temptation," I murmured, strangling a sob in my throat.

He closed the door between us, and I heard him throw himself on the bed, moaning once or twice like one in pain. Then all was still.

After that I brought the sofa pillows and a blanket, and threw myself on the floor directly in front of his chamber, so that he would be compelled to step over me in coming out. Having tossed restlessly for some time, at last I fell into a stupid sort of drowse, when (I know not to this day whether it was imagination or reality) it seemed as if a dark-robed form glided to my side, and held a sponge exhaling some sort of sickening odour to my nostrils.

It was broad daylight, and the sun was shining in at the great oriel window at the end of the corridor, when I awoke from my lethargic slumber. Softly unclosing Guy's door, I saw that he was still buried in the deep sleep of exhaustion, and went away without arousing him.

He was astir, however, long before the breakfast-bell rung, and preceded me to the morning-room. Mrs. Dacre and Eloise were waiting for us. The latter looked pale and hollow-eyed, but our hostess was as rosily brilliant as ever, and so arch, piquant,

irresistible, in her pink morning robe, that I scarcely wondered at my brother's infatuation. Many a man would have bartered his soul for a touch of those red lips.

Guy seemed grave and thoughtful, and none of us, save Mrs. Dacre, was in the best of spirits. She chatted and laughed, as if trouble were a word unknown to her. Mr. Richard had not made his appearance as yet; but, in the midst of her gay badinage, a loud outcry was suddenly heard upstairs.

We stared at each other with frightened faces. Then, as if by common consent, we all rose from the table, and rushed in the direction from whence the unusual sounds proceeded.

They led us directly to the ante-room. There stood Mr. Richard, beside the escritoir, just outside the door of his chamber, the perfect picture of horrified amazement. He turned, hearing our noisy approach, and threw up his hands.

"The diamond is gone!" he screamed.

Then, pointing to the escritoir, which stood wide open, he dropped into the nearest chair, covering his face with two trembling hands.

For the space of a minute there was a terrible silence in the little room. Then Guy moved forward a few paces.

"Gone?" he ejaculated. "Impossible!"

Nobody answered him. With a cry of dismay, Mrs. Dacre stooped to search the escritoir. Eloise touched her arm, and said in a hard, cold tone of voice:

"You need not look for the jewel. You will not find it."

I glanced at Guy, and our eyes met. Was it possible he had made a second attempt, stepping over my body while I lay in that strange, deep slumber? His lids did not droop beneath my fixed gaze.

"This is none of my doing," he said, in a fierce undertone.

I was in a maze. The escritoir was turned upside-down, but all to no purpose. Finally Mrs. Dacre lifted her blue eyes pleadingly to my face.

"The diamond has certainly been stolen," said she. "We are all so incapable, so overcome. Will you see that the proper steps are taken to recover the jewel, Mr. Devonshire?"

Mr. Richard broke out violently, before I could answer.

"The diamond must and shall be found! I'll have the police! I'll search the whole house!"

Mrs. Dacre tried to calm him.

"I am so sorry this has happened," said she, thoughtfully, "and in my house. Everything shall be done that can be. We may get some clue to the missing valuable."

"The police! the police!" shrieked Mr. Richard, like one beside himself.

I attempted to get a word with Eloise; but she turned her back on me with such a forbidding look, every time I approached, that the thing was impossible. I was half crazed by the terrible event that had occurred, and loth to take any steps in the matter, lest I should be the means of fastening the guilt upon my own brother.

To my surprise, Guy seemed even eager that an investigation should take place.

"We will telegraph for Detective Saul," said he, naming an old acquaintance of ours. "He is just the man, and could get down here by the noon train."

It was he who sent the message. He set about the search with an earnestness that could not have been wholly assumed. In the first place, he took care that the servants should get no inkling of what had happened. Then he thoroughly overhauled the ante-room and Mr. Richard's bed-chamber, coming out of the latter very much paler than when he went in.

"Here is a minute fragment of sponge which I found on your dressing-table," said he, speaking to Mr. Richard. "Was it there when you went to bed last night?"

"No," replied the East Indian, decidedly.

"I thought not. It exhales the odour of stale chloroform."

How the Weathercock was Oiled.

"I'M game to do it," says Billy Johnson, "any time you like."

"Not you," says Joey Rance. "It aint in you."

"Aint it?" says Billy.

And as he spoke he took a pull at his strap, and Parson says—

"My good man, I couldn't think of allowing it."

You see, this is how it was. We'd got a weathercock a-top of our church spire at High Beechy; and it was a cock in real earnest, just like the great Dorking in Farmer Granger's yard; only the one on the spire was gilt, and shone in the sun quite beautiful.

There was another difference, though. Farmer Granger's Dorking used to crow in the morn, and sometimes on a moonlight night; but the gilt one a-top of the steeple, after going on swinging round and round, to show quietly which way the wind blew, took it into its head to stick fast in calm weather, while in a rough wind—oh, lor' a' mercy! the way it would screech and groan was enough to alarm the neighbourhood, and alarm the neighbourhood it did.

I wouldn't believe as it was the weathercock at first, but quite took to old Mother Bonnett's notion as it was signs of the times, and a kind of warning to High Beechy of something terrible to come to pass.

But there, when you stood and saw it turning slowly round in the broad daylight, and heard it squeal, why, you couldn't help yourself, but were bound to believe.

Just about that time a chap as called himself Steeple Jack—not the real Steeple Jack, you know, but an impostor sort of fellow, who, we heard afterwards, had been going about and getting sovereigns to climb the spires, and oil the weathercocks, and do a bit of repairs, and then going off without doing anything at all—well, this fellow came to High Beechy, and saw Parson, and offered to go up, clean and scrape the weathercock, oil it and all, without scaffolding, for a five pound note.

Parson said it was too much, and consulted churchwarden Round, who said "ditto;" and so

Steeple Jack did not get the job even when he came down to three pound, and then to a sovereign; for, bless you, we were too sharp for him at High Beechy, and suspected that all he wanted was the money, when, you know, we couldn't have made him go up, it being a risky job.

The weathercock went on squeaking then awfully, till one afternoon, when we were out on the green with the cricketing tackle for practice, Parson being with us, for we were going to play Ramboro' Town next week, and Parson was our best bowler.

He was a thorough gentleman was Parson, and he used to say he loved a game at cricket as much as ever, and as to making one of our eleven, he used to do that, he said, because he was then sure that no one would swear, or take more than was good for him.

Speaking for our lot, I'm sure it made us all respect Parson the more; and I tell you one thing it did besides, it seemed to make him our friend to go to in all kind of trouble, and what's more, it fetched all our lot in the cricket club to church when I'm afraid if it hadn't been out of respect to Parson we should have stopped away.

Why, I've known him on a hot evening at practice between the overs suddenly cry "Hold hard!" with the ball in his hands, and say—

"Tell you what, my lads, I think a glass of Tompkins's home-brewed wouldn't be amiss just now. Smith, my man, will you step across and tell them to send me a gallon?"

Then when it was brought all cool and foaming from out of the cellar, and he took the first glass as a matter of course, he'd got a knack of saying something sensible to a man in a way as did more good than the preaching in a month of Sundays.

"Tlat!" he'd say, with a smack of the lips when he'd finished the cool draught. "That's good, refreshing, invigorating, and hearty. What a pity it is some men will be such fools as to take more than is good for them. Come, my lads, another glass round, and then to work."

Why, you may laugh at me, but we all of us loved our Parson, and he could turn us all this way or that way with his little finger.

Well, we were out on the green, as I said, and the talk turned about oiling the weathercock, and about how we'd heard as Steeple Jack, as he called himself, had undertaken to do Upperthorpe steeple, as is thirty feet lower than ours, and had got the money and gone off.

"I thought he was a rogue," said Billy Johnson. "He looked like it; drinking sort of fellow. Tell you what, I'm game to do it any time you like."

"Not you," says Joey Rance. "It aint in you."

"Aint it," says Billy, tightening his belt, and then—

"My good man," says Parson, "I couldn't think of allowing it."

You see, ours was a splendid spire, standing altogether a hundred and seventy feet six inches high; and as it says in the old history, was a landmark and a beacon to the country for miles round. There was a square tower seventy feet high, and out of this sprang the spire, tapering up a hundred feet, and certainly one of the finest in the county.

"Oh, I'd let him go, sir," says Joey; "he can climb like a squirrel."

"Or a tom-cat," says another.

"More like a monkey," says Sam Rowley, our wicket-keeper.

"Never mind what I can climb like," says Billy. "I'm game to do it; so here goes."

"But if you do get up," said Parson, "you will want tools to take off and oil the weathercock, and you can't carry them."

Just then a message came from the rectory that Parson was wanted, and he went away in a hurry; and no sooner had he gone than there was no end of chaff about Billy, which ended in his pulling up his belt another hole, and saying—

"I'm going."

"And what are you going to do when you get up there?"

"Nothing," he says, "but tie the rope up to the top of the spire, and leave it for some of you clever chaps to do."

"What rope shall you use?" I said.

"The new well rope," says Billy. "It's over two hundred feet long."

Cricketing was set aside for that day, for Joey Rance went off and got the rope, coming back with it coiled over his arm, and throwing it down before Billy in a defiant sort of way, as much as to say—

"There, now let's see you do it."

Without a word, Billy picked up the coil of rope and went in at the belfry door, to come out soon after on the top of the tower, and then, with one end of the rope made into a loop and thrown over his shoulders, he went to one edge of the eight-sided spire and began to climb up from crocket to crocket, which were about a yard apart, and looking like so many ornamental knobs sticking out from the spire.

We gave him a cheer as he began to go up, and then sat on the grass wondering like to see how active and clever the fellow was as he went up yard after yard, climbing rapidly, and seeming as if he'd soon be at the top.

The whole of the village turned out in a state of excitement, and we had hard work to keep two brave fellows from going up to try at other corners of the spire.

"He'll do it—he'll do it!" was the cry over and over again.

And it seemed as if he would, for he went on rapidly till he was within some thirty feet of the top; when all of a sudden he seemed to lose his hold, and came sliding rapidly down between two rows of crockets, faster and faster, till he disappeared behind the parapet of the tower.

We held our breath, one and all, as we saw him fall, and a cold chill of horror came upon us. It was not until he had reached the top of the tower that we roused ourselves to run to the belfry door, and began to go up the spiral staircase to get to the poor fellow, whom we expected to find half-dead.

"Hallo!" cried Billy's voice, as we got half-way up the corkscrew. "I'm coming down."

"Aint you hurt, then?" cried Joey Rance.

"No, not much," said Billy, as we reached him by one of the loopholes in the stone wall. "Got some skin off, and a bit bruised."

"Why, we thought you were half killed," we said.

"Not I," he replied, gruffly; "the rope caught over one of the crockets, and that broke my fall a bit."

"Going to try again?" said Joey, with a sneer.

"No, I aint going to try again, neither," said Billy, gruffly. "I left the robe up at the top there, thinking you were so clever you'd like to go."

"Oh, I could do it if I liked," said Joey.

"Only you daren't," said Bill, rubbing his elbows, and putting his lips to his bleeding knuckles.

"Daren't I?" said Joey.

And without another word he pushed by Billy, and went on steadily up towards the top of the tower.

"I hope he'll like it," said Billy, chuckling. "It aint so easy as he thinks. Let's go down. I'm a good bit shook, and want a drop of brandy."

Poor fellow, he looked rather white when we got down; and to our surprise on looking up, on hearing a cheer, there was Joey hard at work, with the rope over his shoulder, climbing away, the lads cheering him again and again as he climbed higher and higher, till he at last reached the great copper support of the weathercock, and then, drawing himself up a bit higher, he clung there motionless for a few minutes, and we began to think that he had lost his nerve and was afraid to move.

But that wasn't it—he was only gathering breath; and we gave him a cheer, in which Billy Johnson heartily joined, as, up there looking as small as a crow, the plucky fellow gave the weathercock a spin round, afterwards holding on by his legs, clasped round the copper support, while he took the rope from his shoulders, undid the loop, and then tied it securely to the great, strong support.

All this time he had had his straw hat on; and now, taking it off, he gave it a skim away from him; and away it went right out into space, to fall at last far from the foot of the tower.

Joey now began to come down very slowly and carefully, as if the coming down was worse than the going up, and more than once he slipped; but he had tight hold of the rope with one hand, and that saved him, so that he only rested, and then continued to come down.

You see, the spire sloped so that he did not hang away from it, but against the stone sides; and so we went on watching him till he was about half-way down, when he stopped to rest, and, pulling up the rope a bit as he stood with one foot on a crocket, he tied in it a big loop, slipped one leg right through, and sat in it, swinging to and fro as he held on to the rope so as to rest his legs.

We gave him another cheer, and so did Parson, who just then came up, when Joey waved his hand.

As he did this, something occurred which took away my breath; for, poor fellow, he seemed to slip, and, before we could utter a cry, he turned over and hung head downwards, falling, with his leg slipping through the loop, till his foot caught; and he hung by it, fighting hard for a few moments to get back, but all in vain; and, as we watched him, his struggles got weaker, so that he did not turn himself up so far when trying to reach the loop where his ankle was caught; and at last he hung there, swinging gently to and fro, only moving his hands.

By this time Parson, I, and two more had got to

the belfry door, and we ran panting up the dark staircase till we got out upon the leads.

"Hold on, Joey," I shouted. "I'm coming."

"Make haste," he cried back, faintly. "I'm about done."

By this time I was about ten feet up, and climbing as hard as I could, forgetting all the danger in the excitement; for I don't think I should have dared to go up on another occasion.

It was very hard work, and as I climbed the wind seemed to blow terribly; but I got up and up, panting as I did so, till at last I was clinging there with one foot resting on a crocket, wondering what I should do.

"Look sharp, lad," said poor Joey. "It seems as if all my blood was rushing into my head."

I leaned over and got hold of the rope close to his ankle, but do anything more I could not. I had all the will in the world to help the poor fellow, but it took all my strength to keep myself with one hand from falling, and as to raising my old companion, I neither had the strength nor the idea as to how it could be done.

The only way out of the difficulty seemed to be to take out my knife and cut the rope, and then the poor fellow would be killed.

"Come down," cried a voice below me.

And looking towards the leads, there was Parson, stripped to his shirt and trousers, and with a coil of rope over his shoulder—for the new well rope had proved to be long enough to let him cut off some five and thirty feet.

"Don't leave me," groaned Joey, who was half-fainting. "I feel as if I should fall any moment. I say, lad, this is very awful!"

"Here's Parson coming up," I said.

And so it was; for he went to the row of crockets on the other side of Joey, who now hung, looking blue in the face, and with his eyes closed.

"He must make haste—make haste," he moaned softly.

I stopped, holding on, while Parson climbed up quicker than either of us had done it, drawing himself up by his arms in a wonderful way till he was abreast of us two—me holding on, and Joey hanging by one foot.

As soon as Parson reached us, he said a few words of encouragement to Joey, who did not speak a word, and then climbing higher, tied the short rope he carried to the long rope just above the loop-knot which held Joey's ankle. Then, coming down a little, he tied his rope tightly round Joey, just under the armpits.

"That will bear you, my lad," he said. "But catch fast hold of it with your hands, while I cut your foot free."

Climbing up higher once more, he pulled out his knife, opened it with his teeth, and then began to saw through the strands of the loop that held Joey's ankle, till there was a snap, a jerk, and a heavy swinging to and fro; for the poor fellow had fallen two or three feet, and was now hanging by the rope round his breast, right way upwards.

He did not make any effort for a few minutes, and as cheer after cheer came to us from below, he swung there, with us holding on for dear life.

"Can you climb down now, Rance," said Parson, "if I cut you free?"

"No, sir," he said, hoarsely, "I've no use in my arms or legs—they're all pins and needles."

"Then we must lower you down," said Parson, calmly.

And getting hold of the long piece of rope, he climbed up once more, as coolly as if he was on an apple tree in his own orchard, and saw that the knots were fast; then, coming down, he passed his long rope through the one round Joey's breast, and tied it again round him.

"Now," he said, "Fincher and I will hold on by this rope, and you can let yourself slide through the other loop—one arm first, and then the other, steadily."

The poor fellow had hard work to do it; but the loop was loose enough to let him work it over his head, and then, with Parson striding across from the crockets at one angle to those on the other, and me holding on to the rope as well, we let him down sliding, with his back to the stone, till his feet touched the leads, when he fell down all of a heap.

"Untie the rope," said Parson, "and get him down."

He spoke very hoarsely, shouting to them below; and a cheer came up.

"Now, Fincher," said Parson, "we've got to get down."

As he spoke, he made a running noose in the rope with the end he held in his hand, let it run up to the big noose, and pulled it tight.

Then he made an effort to get his legs together on one angle; but the distance he had been bending was too great, and he couldn't recover himself, but swung away by his hands.

"I can't help it, Fincher—I must go first," he cried.

And he was already sliding down the rope as he spoke; but I was so unnerved and giddy now that I dared not look down.

I believe I quite lost my head then for a few moments; for I was clinging there for life a hundred and twenty feet above the ground, and the wind seemed to be trying to push me from my hold.

I was brought to myself, though, just as the landscape about me seemed to be spinning round, by feeling the rope touch my side; and I clasped it convulsively with both hands, and then, winding my legs round it, slid rapidly down, the rope seeming to turn to fire as it passed through my hands.

A few moments later, and I was safe on the tower leads, trying like the rest to smile at the danger we had passed through; but it was a faint, sickly kind of smile, and we were all very glad to get down to the green, and cared nothing for the cheers of the people.

The rope was left hanging there, and stayed till it rotted away; but somehow before a week was out that weathercock stopped squeaking, as if some one had been up to oil it, and, though nothing was said about it, I've always felt as sure as sure that Parson went up himself and did it early one morning before any one was up.

He was cool-headed enough to do it, for he certainly saved Joe Rance's life, and I know no one in

the village would have done it without bragging after. At all events, the weathercock was oiled, and as I said over and over again to Joey, "If Parson didn't oil that weathercock, who did?"

An Inventive Genius.

"GOOD gracious, boy, what is the matter with your face?"

"The c—c—c—cat," sobbed Master James Robinson.

"The cat!" cried his mother. "Scratched your face like that?"

"Ye—e—es, mother," sobbed Master James. Flew—ew—ew at me, and stuck—uck—uck—uck its nasty claw—aw—aws in my cheek—eek—eeks, and tri—i—i—ied to scra—a—a—atch my ey—ey—ey—ey—eyes—out."

"My poor, dear, darling boy," cried mamma Robinson; and she set to and began bathing his torn face. "That cat ought to be killed—a wretch. Why, it must be wild. Were you teasing it?"

"N—n—n—o—o—o," sobbed Master Robinson.

And he mentally vowed that he would never touch it again.

For he had touched that cat, and this was how it happened:—

Master James had read somewhere, in a book of adventure, how the blacks, when they saw a poisonous snake sleeping in the sun, would steal up to it very quietly, seize it by the tail, and give it a snap, as a carter does with his whip; the consequence being that the vertebrae would be dislocated, and in nine times out of ten the head would be snapped off.

As a matter of course, they never attempted to tackle boa-constrictors in this manner, but reserved their attentions for the slight, thin snakes whose weight and length made them manageable.

Now, this made a very great impression upon Master James, who was a very ingenious boy, and had tried to put a good many wild-life plans into effect. In fact, one day he was brought home nearly drowned from the pond where he had been afloat in a washing tub, propelling himself with one hand by means of a small cricket bat, which was his paddle; while with the other he threw a kind of spear or harpoon that he had fashioned with a dozen yards of kite string and a pig's bladder attached—after the fashion of the Esquimaux with the seals; the seals he tried to harpoon being the ducks.

He tried to destroy a big dog a few days later by giving it a mouse to swallow—the said mouse being stuffed with a pennyworth of gunpowder, and a string rubbed with saltpetre attached; this being the nearest he could get to the scientific gentleman's plan of exploding a crocodile by means of a kid stuffed with gunpowder, attached by wire to an electric battery.

But this plan failed; for the dog would not swallow the mouse, and the mouse would not go off; but a duck did swallow it, and ran away with the string.

He hunted cows as there were no buffaloes, and shot arrows into their skins, making them set up their tails, and canter ponderously round the fields.

He lassoed pigs; and, having secured his lasso to his belt, he was one day dragged all round a field, and taken home half dead, being found stuck in a hedge through which piggy had bolted, and as Master James came across the gap the string broke.

Altogether he was a nice boy, was Master James Robinson; and it was not to be wondered at then that he should pick up a big stone one day when he saw the miller's Tom cat sitting on a wall watching the sparrows, and prepare to break its head, only the sight of its tail induced him to make a different attack.

For that tail was hanging down on Master Robinson's side, gently writhing at the end in a very serpentine manner; so suggestive, indeed, of the snake, that Master James paused, and went back to take off his shoes and stockings, so as to creep upon pussy unawares.

He sniggered gently at the thought of the famous trick he was going to play upon Master Tom, who would, he felt sure, be extremely delighted; and in his own mind he was certain that if he got tight hold of that tail, and gave it a snap, pussy's head would go flying off, and roll along the garden walk.

It was very funny, but it did not work, for Master James Robinson did not take it into his calculations that Tom weighed about a stone—horseman's weight—and that his resemblance to a snake ceased at the point of insertion of his tail.

However, he crept cautiously on towards where Tom, with his attention fully taken up by the sparrows, sat watchful and still, the sun glistening on his glossy back, and his tail offering itself to the marauding hand of the adventurous young pirate, who was creeping nearer and nearer.

Once Tom's ears changed their position from cock forward to cock backward; but as Master James Robinson paused on the instant, with all the caution of a Red Indian on the war-path, and remained as silent, the ears went forward again, and all was watchful as before.

Master James behaved magnificently. He crept closer and closer, till he got within spring; and then, launching himself through the air, he caught the writhing tail, and, giving it a scientific snap, dragged Tom from the wall.

The head did not snap off, neither were the vertebrae dislocated. It only seemed to Tom as if some one was trying to pull his tail out by the roots—if it had any—and, resenting this attack upon his personal dignity—especially as it was the only tail he had—he spun himself round, and planted his claws on either side of Master James Robinson's face, tore at him viciously, bit him in the nose, and then, finding no objection made by the young gentleman to his departure, he leaped down, scrambled over the wall, and went off, swearing horribly.

For a few minutes Master James sat yelling with agony, and inventing stories about falling into blackberry bushes; but finally he went home, and told how he had been scratched, avoiding, however, most scrupulously all allusion to the attack made upon poor pussy's tail.

ONE pretty flirt will make a dozen plain girls unhappy for an entire evening.

A Warning to Dogs.

THE great Dr. Watts said, "Let dogs delight to bark and bite," and so they do; but not without coming to grief. The other day, a handsome carriage was rolling along the St. Alban's-road. Under the forward axle galloped a sleek coach dog. His pace was so timed with that of the horses that he did not appear to vary a hair's-breadth in his position. He knew everybody was looking at him and admiring him, but he didn't let that turn his head. Other dogs came out and scowled at him, but they were too discreet to attempt to interfere with him. So on he went with beautiful regularity, his brass collar with his master's name glittering in the sun, and all was peace till a snarly cur, riding on a waggon full of sacks, and barking at everything that passed, caught sight of the sleek dog galloping so composedly beneath the handsome carriage. The country dog was a lank animal, with dun-coloured, tangled hair, and a desire to show off. Without the faintest hesitation he sprang from the sacks, and made a headlong dash on the spotted coach dog. Whether he mistook the length of his stride or the revolution of the wheels is not known, but he had his mouth open and his teeth in readiness set for a bite, when the forward wheel struck him and knocked him forward, and the off-horse gave him a kick that sent him back again, and the forward wheel passed over him and turned him over, and the hind wheel climbed up on him, and went grindingly down on the other side. And then the carriage went on just the same as before, leaving the country dog on his back, yelping with his whole heart, and thinking of the green fields and umbrageous trees, and what an egregious ass he had made of himself. Let this be a warning to the domestic intelligent dog.

A Growing Sailor.

A NAUTICAL gentleman, passing through Shadwell the other day, became favourably impressed with a pair of trousers hanging in front of a cheap clothing store kept by a German Jew. The price was low, the goods seemed all right, and he made up his mind to purchase.

"I gif you de word dat dose trousers are shust like iron," said the dealer. "I warrants dem."

After three or four days' wear, the purchaser found the bottom of the trousers crawling towards his knees. It was a bad case of shrinkage, and he grew angry, and went back to the place and said—

"You swindled me with these trousers. See how they have shrunk!"

The dealer looked him all over, felt his head, pulled on the trousers, and finally said—

"I shall give you twenty pounds a month if you will travel with me."

"How—what?"

"You are shust growing right up at the rate of two inches a day, and I takes you aroundt the country on exhibition. Dose trousers are shust as long as efer, but you have grown out of dem."

"I don't believe it," shouted the sailor; "I am forty years old, and stopped growing long ago."

"I gif you de word of a gentleman dat you are growing."

"I don't care whose word you give. I say these trousers have shrunk nearly a foot."

"Has de tops of dose trousers shrunk down any?" softly asked the dealer.

"Why, no."

"Shouldn't de vaistbands shrink down shust as queek as dose bottom should shrink up? If it's in de cloth, one part should shrink like de odder, eh? When I sold you dat elegant pair of trousers for fifteen shilling, I don't know you was growing so fast, or I shall haf put zum straps on de bottoms."

"Well, I don't like this way of doing business," said the sailor.

"Shust like me. If I sells such elegant trousers as dose to a man, and he grows out of dem, it damages my trade. You haf damaged me fifty pounds; but I haf low rent, pay cash for my goods, and can make dis half-crown tie for sixpence."

The man walked out to the curbstone, and turning round, shook his fist, and said—

"You are a liar, and a cheat. Come out here!"

"Such tings sink into my heart," sighed the dealer, as he took down his pipe. "I dinks I sells out this peeness, and peddle some vases aroundt. Den when I sells to somebody, it makes no difference how much dey grow."

The Egotist's Note-book.

THE examination of the detectives at Bow-street seems to be affording the most intense gratification to the rough element of town. The exterior of the court has been thronged by hundreds of the most villainous types of countenance that we can muster; and the remarks bandied about seem to indicate that these days are to be marked with white stones in the roughs' calendar. Kurr was the first to be taken away; and strange to say, although by his own admission a forger, a swindler, a thief, and an informer, he was heartily cheered by the mob. The three detective officers, on the other hand, who followed shortly afterwards in another police van, were received with corresponding hoots, groans, and hisses.

A political thermometer might very well be contrived. Temperate might be represented by Order. Then, going downward, we should have Calm—Dozy—Snoring. Going upward: Dis-order—Irish heat—Power—O'Donnell—below par—well, above par—well, suspension.

"Britons never shall be slaves." Every man should serve his country, especially when we learn that while our soldiers are abroad on foreign service, their wives and children left at home, as in the case of those belonging to the battalion just embarked at Portsmouth, are allowed—the women sixpence per day, and the children threepence per day, at the country's expense. Wonderful! If the country cannot do better than that for the wives and children of the men who go out to face death in a score of forms, the country had better do nothing, but leave the poor creatures to private charity. Sixpence a day! Barely enough

for a loaf of bread in a land where even water cannot be had without payment.

A new edition of Stokers and Pokers is coming out in America, with every prospect of the Stokers getting the worst of it, especially as the Pokers are different to those described by Sir Francis Head, being in this case bayonets.

Some charmingly *naïve* things have been written to the papers about the late suicide case at Christ's Hospital. Among others, one old woman of the masculine gender states that the boys are proud of their dress. That goes without saying, as the French would put it. Any sensitive boy would be proud of an idiotic, jaundiced dress, which sends him out without covering to the head in all weathers, and makes him the laughing-stock of every mischievous urchin he meets. The last piece of wisdom comes from a monitor, who, to prove how slight the floggings are, writes to the papers to say that he never knew a boy experience any discomfort from his flogging after twenty-four hours had elapsed: "Nay, I remember a friend playing football in a most spirited way five minutes after he had received a 'severe' flogging." Of course, it made him go. The same effect has been observed in donkeys after castigation.

I went to a post-office yesterday for a stamp, and presented a French two-sous piece, which was refused, with the curt remark, "We don't take 'em." I thought at the time it would be a hard case if it was the last coin a poor person had. These coins are legal tenders or they are not; at least, if they are not, Government should veto their circulation.

Said a friend to a not particularly bright-witted nobleman the other day—

"How is it that you have taken into your service a man who was dismissed from his last place for theft?"

"Well, I don't know. I hesitated for some time, but at length my mind was decided by the reflection that the man had not robbed me."

The Marquis of Hartington has been *fêted* again in the City, and presented with the freedom of a company. Good. In future it will be the correct thing to address him in Shakspearean form, even as one Hamlet spoke to an aged man named Polonius, "Sir, you are a fishmonger!"

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The Lord Mayor was nearly run over the other day by a cabman, who afterwards behaved as cabmen generally do—added insult to injury—abused the man he had nearly killed. Cabby, of the genus Hansom, knocked down the writer one day, and apologized as follows: "Well, you must be a fool;" and, in my folly, I felt far more resentful than his lordship, who declared that, being Lord Mayor, he must put up with that which would be punished had the sufferer been one of the public. Such humility is delightful, and cabby must have blessed it; for he got off with an admonition. Only fancy, though, if the Lord Mayor had been knocked down in the City! But it is too awful to contemplate. Would a reign of anarchy have set in, with mob law—a kind of Anglo-French revolution, and the destruction of Temple Bar? It seems probable; for perhaps a new Lord Mayor could not have been elected till the ninth of November.

The following took place at a theatre the other night between a young husband and wife. He left her, and stepped out to see a friend between the acts:—

"Why, Edward," said she, when he returned, "there are tears in your eyes."

"Yes, pet," replied he, solemnly, "I suppose there are. I saw such a sad sight when I was out."

"You did? what was it?" inquired she.

"Such a sad sight," continued he, keeping his face away, that she might not smell his breath. "I discovered a young man whom I have known for years drinking whiskey."

"You did?"

"Yes, standing right in plain sight before me, partaking deeply and carelessly of the dreadful intoxicating glass."

There was a little pause, when the young lady suddenly said:

"Edward, was he standing right in front of you?"

"Yes, pet," was the reply.

There was another pause, when the young lady asked again:

"Edward, don't most of the refreshment counters have great mirrors on the walls behind them?"

Edward flushed a little and looked quizzical as he replied that he "believed" they did, and there he permitted the subject to drop.

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Tit-Bits from Helen's Babies.

"O H—h—h—h—ee—ee—ee—ee—oo—oo—oo—oo—" came from the window over my head.

Then came a shout of "Uncle Harry" in a voice I recognized as that of Budge. I made no reply: there are moments when the soul is full of utterances unfit to be heard by childish ears.

"Uncle Harry!" repeated Budge.

Then I heard a window-blind open, and Budge exclaiming—

"Uncle Harry, we want you to come and tell us stories."

I turned my eyes upward quickly, and was about to send a savage negative in the same direction, when I saw in the window a face unknown and yet remembered. Could those great, wistful eyes, that angelic mouth, that spiritual expression, belong to my nephew Budge? Yes, it must be; that super-celestial nose and those enormous ears never belonged to any one else. I turned abruptly, and entered the house, and was received at the head of the stairway by two little figures in white, the larger of which remarked—

"We want you to tell us stories—papa always does nights."

"Very well, jump into bed. What kind of stories do you like?"

"Oh, 'bout Jonah," said Budge.

"Bout Jonah," echoed Toddie.

"Well, Jonah was out in the sun one day, and a gourd-vine grew up all of a sudden, and made it nice and shady for him, and then it all faded as quick as it came."

A dead silence prevailed for a moment, and then Budge indignantly remarked—

"That aint Jonah a bit—I know 'bout Jonah."

"Oh, you do, do you?" said I; "then maybe you'll be so good as to enlighten me?"

"Huh?"

"If you know about Jonah, tell me the story. I'd really enjoy listening to it."

"Well," said Budge, "once upon a time the Lord told Jonah to go to Nineveh and tell the people they was all bad. But Jonah didn't want to go, so he went on a boat that was going to Joppa. And then there was a big storm, an' it rained, an' blowed, an' the big waves went as high as a house. An' the sailors thought there must be somebody on the boat that the Lord didn't like. An' Jonah said he guessed he was the man. So they picked him up and sроod him in the ocean, an' I don't think it was well for 'em to do that after Jonah told the troof. An' a big whale was comin' along, an' he was awful hungry, cos the little fishes what he likes to eat all went down to the bottom of the ocean when it began to storm, and whales can't go to the bottom of the ocean, cos they have to come up to brieve, an' little fishes don't. An' Jonah found 'twas all dark inside the whale, and there wasn't any fire there, an' it was all wet, an' he couldn't take off his clothes to dry, cos there wasn't no place to hang 'em, and there wasn't no windows to look out of, nor nothin' to eat, nor nothin', nor nothin', nor nothin'. So he asked the Lord to

let him out; an' the Lord was sorry for him, an' he made the whale go up close to the land, an' Jonah jumped right out of his mouth, an' wasn't he glad! An' then he went to Nineveh, an' done what the Lord told him to, and he ought to have done it in the first place if he had known what was good for him."

"Done first payshe, know what's dood for him," asserted Toddie, in support of his brother's assertion. "Tell us 'nudder story."

"Oh, no—sing us a song," suggested Budge.

"Shing us shong," echoed Toddie.

I searched my mind for a song; but the only one which came promptly was "M'Appari," several bars of which I gave my juvenile audience, when Budge interrupted me, saying—

"I don't think that's very good song."

"Why not, Budge?"

"Cos I don't. I don't know a word what you're talkin' 'bout."

"Shing 'bout 'Glory, glory, halleluyah,'" suggested Toddie.

And I meekly obeyed.

"Don't sing that all day, Uncle Harry; you sing so loud it hurts my head."

"Beg your pardon, Budge," said I. "Good night."

"Why, Uncle Harry, are you going? You didn't hear us say our prayers—papa always does."

"Oh! Well, go ahead."

"You must say yours first," said Budge; "that's the way papa does."

"Very well," said I.

And I repeated St. Chrysostom's prayer from the Episcopal service. I had hardly said "Amen," when Budge remarked—

"My papa don't say any of them things at all. I don't think that's a very good prayer."

"Well, you say a good prayer, Budge."

"All right."

Budge shut his eyes, dropped his voice to the most perfect tone of supplication, while his face seemed fit for a sleeping angel; then he said—

"Dear Lord, we thank thee for lettin' us have a good time to-day, an' we hope all the little boys everywhere have had good times too. We pray you to take care of us an' everybody else to-night, an' don't let 'em have any trouble. Oh, yes, an' Uncle Harry's got some candy in his trunk, cos he said so in the carriage; we thank you for letting Uncle Harry come to see us, an' we hope he's got lots of candy—lots an' piles. An' we pray you to take good care of all the poor little boys and girls that haven't got any papas an' mammas an' Uncle Harry's an' candy an' beds to sleep in. An' take us all to heaven when we die, for Christ's sake. Amen. Now give us the candy, Uncle Harry."

"Hush, Budge; don't Toddie say any prayers?"

"Oh, yes; go on, Tod."

Toddie closed his eyes, wriggled, twisted, breathed hard and quick, acting generally as if his prayers were principally a matter of physical exertion. At last he began—

"Dee Lord, not make me sho bad, an' besh mamma, an' besh papa, an' Budgie, and doppity" (grandmothers), "an' boggies" (grandfather), "an'

"Uncle Harry!"
May the Lord forget the prayer I put up just then!

"Uncle Harry!"
"I'll discipline you, my fine little boy," thought I. "Perhaps if I let you shriek your abominable little throat hoarse, you'll learn better than to torment your uncle, that was just getting ready to love you dearly."

"Uncle Har-ray!"
"Howl away, you little imp!" thought I. "You've got me wide awake, and your lungs may suffer for it."

Suddenly I heard, although in sleepy tones, and with a lazy drawl, some words which appalled me. The murmurer was Toddie—

"Want—shee—wheels—go—wound."
"Budge!" I shouted, in the desperation of my dread lest Toddie, too, might wake up, "what do you want?"

"Uncle Harry!"
"WHAT?"
"Uncle Harry, what kind of wood are you going to make the whistle out of?"

"I won't make any at all—I'll cut a big stick and give you a sound whipping with it, for not keeping quiet, as I told you to."

"Why, Uncle Harry, papa don't whip us with sticks—he spansks us."

Sleep was no longer possible; so I hastily dressed, and went into the garden. Among the beauty and the fragrance of the flowers, and in the delicious morning air, I succeeded in regaining my temper, and was delighted, on answering the breakfast bell, two hours later, to have Budge accost me with—

"Why, Uncle Harry, where was you? We looked all over the house for you, and couldn't find a speck of you."

The breakfast was an excellent one.
I did full justice to the repast, and even regarded with some interest and amusement the industry of Budge and Toddie with their tiny forks and spoons. They ate rapidly for a while, but soon their appetites weakened, and their tongues were unloosed.

"Ucken Hawwy," remarked Toddie, "daysh an awfoo funny chunt up 'tairs—awfoo big chunt. I show it you after brepspup."

"Toddie's a silly little boy," said Budge—"he always says brepspup for brekbux."

"Oh! What does he mean by chunt, Budge?"

"I guess he means trunk," replied my oldest nephew.

Recollections of my childish delight in rummaging an old trunk—it seems a century ago that I did it—caused me to smile at Toddie, to his great apparent delight.

A direful thought struck me. I dashed upstairs, and into my room. Yes, he did mean my trunk.

DR. PARR had dressed for a dinner visit, and was ready a quarter of an hour too soon to set off. "Tom," said he, to his pupil, young Sheridan, "I think I had better whip you now; you are sure to do something while I am out." "I wish you would, sir," said the boy; "it would be a letter of licence for the whole evening!"

The War Correspondent.

BY THE WANDERING JEW.

WITH THE RUSSIANS.

"TAKE that, and that, and that!" I exclaimed, as I delivered blow after blow at the horrible little rodents that kept on attacking me.

For I don't know how it is, but there must be something especially savoury in my flesh. No matter what I did, the horrible little creatures kept up the attack, being beaten off now and then, but only to come back with renewed violence; and every time I beat them off, I could feel that I was growing weaker and more helpless.

In fact, I hardly had time to renew my weapons, so rapidly were the attacks made. There was I tying rats' tails together, and as soon as I had a bunch of vermin I was flogging away as hard as I could, and strewing the floor with my enemies.

You may think that as I slew so many, their companions would have been glad, wolf-fashion, to devour them. But you think wrong. All the little wretches cared to do was to keep up the attack, their angry little eyes blazing with a black-red fury as they uttered their shrill squeaks and darted up my legs.

Sir, I am wounded in your service—badly wounded. They are not deep wounds, such as require a surgeon; but they are virulent, painful wounds, that would make me, were I not a well brought-up, thoughtful man, curse and swear.

At last I could stand it no longer, for a fresh cohort of rats came out of their holes, and with quite military precision prepared themselves for the attack. My arms were weary, my fingers were nipped and bleeding, and I could feel my strength failing to such an extent that in another quarter of an hour I should have been rats' meat; so, pulling myself together, I made a bound, then another, and another, to crush all the enemies I could, and gaining impetus from this series of leaps, I sprang up and caught the bars of my prison window in my bleeding hands, and there I hung.

Fortunately for you, sir, as well as myself, I am strong in the arms. I spent no idle youth learning to smoke or drink, but was always the pride and envy of my companions for my feats of rowing, swimming, running, leaping, and gymnastic exercises. This well-trained youth, sir, hardened my muscle and stood me in good stead now, for, after hanging by my hands for a few minutes to rest myself, with the rats making leaps and nibbling my toes, I gradually drew myself up till I could get my knees in the deep niche which formed the window, and soon after I was sitting there in a crouched-up, knees-to-nose attitude, like a Peruvian mummy, but for the present safe from my enemies' attacks.

You remember, I dare say, admiring my grandly developed biceps on that day when I picked up the heavy sub-editor at your office, and held him at arms' length. Well, sir, that grandly developed biceps was a muscular blessing to me now; and as I grew cooler and calmer, I sat and smiled derisively at the rats. Then I mewed at them like a cat, when there was a rush, and they all scurried off into their

holes, leaving the prison merely strewn with their companions' corpses.

I now began to regret that I had not tried that feline ruse before; for I could have made it appear that the place was full of Tom-cats—you know how natural are all my imitations—and, as the vermin came swarming out again, I sang a few strains of the "Cats' duet."

By Jove, you should have seen the hair stand on end upon their wretched backs. They arched them up, and looked as if they had been dipped in water, scuffling one over the other as they shrieked with horror, and fought their way out of the place.

But there, bless you, a rat is as cunning as a fox; for one grey old rascal stared up at me, saw me mewling, and then, giving his tail a whisk, he went off, and told all the others, with the result that they swarmed out again in a mad rage, leaping up at me, and calling me a swindler as plainly as they could.

It did not matter, so I sat still, getting a few breaths of air through the grating of stout bars, and looking down at the sentry pacing to and fro in his flat cap and great coat.

Tired by their vain efforts, the rats soon went back to their holes. And now it was that the idea struck me—

"Why cannot I escape?"

I began to think; and, after a time, a plan assumed coherence in my brain, and I made up my mind to try.

What a great deal more, sir, might be achieved in this world if people would only try, instead of sitting down with their hands crossed in their laps!

No sooner had the idea come to me that I ought to try and escape, than I began to make my plans.

There was the sentry going to and fro beneath my window, and I had only to thrust my hand out through the bars to touch his muffin cap.

I did not want his muffin cap, so of course I did not touch it; but waiting my opportunity till he was standing with his back to me, and his rifle shouldered so that the point nearly touched the bars, I carefully took hold of the long triangular blade, gave it the proper twist, dislodged it from the rifle barrel, and the next moment had it safely inside.

Careful as I was, I could not avoid a slight grating noise, and the Russian sentry turned his head; but before he could do this I was down in my dungeon listening, and making ready to hide the weapon, even to burying it in my own flesh if I could find no other way.

Fortunately, he did not miss it; and now, as the rats were running out once more, I thrust the blade into the interstices between the stones, placed my foot upon it, and raising myself up with my hands on the window stones, I stood there clear of the attacks of the vermin, and able to watch the sentry without being seen.

Half an hour later a party came up to relieve guard, and I trembled lest they should find that a bayonet was missing. But no, they did not; and a stupid fellow, more sleepy-looking than the last, was put on duty, and I began to prepare for flight.

It was a daring thing to do, but success depended upon the effort; so, watching my opportunity, I de-

spoiled the fresh sentry of his bayonet, and this done, I had one to stand on, while with the point of the other I dug out the wretched cement in which the prison bars were set.

It was an easier task than I expected; and, as the rubbish collected, I swept it up, and, carrying it down, dashed it into the rats' holes, where it did a double duty, blinding some with the fine lime-dust, and choking the holes with the lumps.

By night, working cautiously and quietly, I had loosened four bars to such an extent that I had only to drag them out, and then glide from the hole.

I waited patiently for what I had considered would be a suitable time, and that was directly the sentry had been changed; for my reason told me, knowing as I did the character of the people with whom I had to do, that no sooner would the sentry have been placed on guard, than, knowing it would be four hours before he would be relieved, he would make himself comfortable for a nap.

So it proved, exactly as I had calculated; for hardly had the tramp of the relief passed away, than, as I crouched in the window there, gazing out from utter darkness into the obscurity, I saw the great, burly linesman stretch himself as he uttered a yawn loud enough to be heard by his sergeant, and then, leaning his rifle against the wall, he squatted down, and in five minutes, after fidgeting about a little as if the stones were hard, he was asleep.

Now was my time; and, giving the bars a shake, I took out first one and then another, laying them down softly one after the other till I had four beside me on the ledge, when I descended, and placed them against the door so as to give my gaolers plenty of difficulty in getting in.

Next I climbed up again, with a bayonet thrust in my belt, ready for protection should I encounter a foe.

I looked out, and saw that the sentry did not walk his weary round, but that it was "All's well" all the same; and, thrusting my legs out first, I gradually lowered myself till the bayonet caught across the bars, and there was nothing for it left but to crawl back and rearrange the weapon.

This I did with some difficulty, my legs sticking out of the hole the while, and just as I was in my worst strait the sentry sneezed.

I thought it was all over, and that the next minute I should be seized, perhaps bayoneted; but no, as I hung there—I don't say trembling, but with a strange sensation of trepidation passing through my frame—I heard the sentry sink down again, and begin to snore heavily.

The next moment I had wriggled out and dropped lightly on the ill-paved court, when, as a precaution, I seized the sentry's piece and carried it off for some distance before, thrusting it into a woodstack by a cottage in the outskirts of the little town, I prepared to make off.

There was not a chance, for, to my horror, I found that there were sentries in a chain round the place, and, go which way I would, I was in danger of being stopped; so, making a virtue of necessity, I went back to the woodstack, climbed upon it, and

lay down on the top, ten feet above the ground, and there I fell fast asleep.

I must have lain asleep there for some hours, for it was broad daybreak before I was awakened by the noise of firing, and, on sitting up, I bobbed down again, for there was a fierce fight going on. The Turks had surprised the Russians, and the shells were screaming over my head. Pit-pat, I could hear the bullets striking and burying themselves in the wood-stack, while the firing was going on all sides.

I soon found that I was literally in the centre of the firing, the bullets from both sides pattering amongst the faggots, so that it was only by lying very close that I could hope to save my life.

Of course I wanted to save it, for it is the only one I've got. Had I been cat-like and possessed of nine, I might, with the bravery of some of your contemporaries' correspondents, have sat up, and watched the progress of the fight.

But I am frank, I did not. I was too hungry and sick of my job for the time being. Besides which, I felt that I had done enough to prove my courage; so I lay quite still, with the bullets whistling, the shells screaming, and the shouts of the Russians as they charged again and again heard on all sides.

I believe I should have stopped where I was till the fight was over, only it seemed to me that a company of Russians had made the woodstack a protection, and were firing from its shelter.

The Turks, knowing this, brought one of their guns to bear, and shell after shell went across, till at last I heard one bury itself in the wood beneath me, and before I could gather my scattered senses, there was a terrible explosion, and the faggots upon which I lay were thrown upwards.

Of course I went with them, I should say twenty feet perpendicularly into the air, and came down again flat where I had been lying before, stunned and helpless.

Just as I was coming to, and feeling myself all over for wounds, I became aware of a blinding smoke arising round me, and knew that the wood-stack had been set on fire by the shell.

If I stayed, I knew I should be burned to death; so, sooner than be roasted, I determined to go down amongst the Russians; and, rolling over and over to the edge, I let myself slide down amongst the party who were still firing from the precious shelter.

Before they had time to recover from their astonishment, the Turks charged, and I was borne along in the *émeute*, to find myself at last in the midst of a Russian regiment, who checked the Turkish advance; and at last, when we had retreated in an orderly way, I found that they knew nothing of me or my having been a prisoner, the colonel accepting my explanations that I was a War Correspondent who had been a little too zealous, and had got himself surrounded in the fight.

Moreover, he offered to let me stay with his regiment; and here I am with the Ramchichoffsky regiment—one of the last that crossed at Simnitza.

It is a strange life this exchanging the lazy *dolce far niente* of Turkish life, with the incessant smoking and cups of coffee, handed by Nubian slaves, for the hissing *samovar* or tea urn, which is brought

out on every occasion, morning, noon, and night. It is mild work, I assure you, pledging one another in glasses of tea, with, when one is very lucky, a slice of lemon floating therein. As to milk or sugar, those are things we never think of here; probably, because we can't get them.

I had left off there, for I had nothing important to write of, and was consoling myself, after my hard struggle with rats and starvation, with a long Russian sausage and some decentish bread, when the Prince who is in command of the corps with which I am sent for me, and I went to his tent.

"Do I understand aright," he said, "that you wish to be in the thick of the advance?"

"You do understand aright, most illustrious," I said.

"But when the balls are falling thick, and the shells are screaming, how then?"

"How was it, oh, Prince, when your men brought me in?"

"True," he said, meditatively; "you were in the thick of the fight. But look here, young man, if I consent to let you go with my staff, no larks!"

"Larks, most illustrious Prince!" I exclaimed.

"Well, I mean if you are killed, I am not going to have your people—wives, daughters, and other baggage—coming upon me for damages, do you hear?"

"On the word of a Solomon—no," I said.

And the bargain was struck, with the result that I have followed him through the thick of the battle of Plevna, and saved his life twice.

It has been a horrible fight, and I will not describe it, only tell you that we have not retreated, only drawn back for reinforcements, and then we are going forward again; for nothing serious will be done until the Turks are driven out of that stronghold, and that they must be ere many days are over. Till then, adieu. If I am not cut down in the flower of my youth, I shall have much to communicate in my next.

Talk about flour, I'd give something for a quartern of really good meal, to pass into the hands of a pretty Bulgarian maiden at the cottage where I am lodging. There are plum trees in the garden, and the plums are ripe. There is a cow here, and butter and cream. After starving on rats and leather, can you be surprised at my longing for plum-tart? Alas, I long in vain. Till my next, *Barin samovar—ai-dah yemshchik*—go along, driver, as we say out here.

MEM. TO EDITOR.—Don't put this in; but the fact is, I'm bound to stop with the Russians now, for the Turks have sworn to pin me down with bayonets for meddling with their social institutions. My life was only saved for a short time by my being cast into prison. Of course I ran off to the Russian lines as soon as I could. All that about the rats was, of course, gammon. There were some mice, though—several. I was obliged to invent something to account for being in prison, and to make it interesting, and shall now stick to it that I am forced by the Russians to report on their side. I had a narrow squeak for my life, though, I can tell you.

I say, isn't it ridiculous that a fellow with a thousand wives should make such a confounded fuss about a bit of a flirtation with one? Ta-ta for the present. Richard's himself again, and ready for any amount of work. S.

P.S.—Of course the sentry whose bayonet I got was a Turk. *Verb. sap.*

The Cocoanut in a New Form.

NO T without reason is it that Englishmen pride themselves on their national energy in originating and promoting new industries. Many a well-known firm of tradesmen is indebted for its prosperity to the sagacity of its founders, or, at all events, of one of its members, either in inventing some new material, of which no one previously had felt the want, or in discovering some new method of satisfying a want that already existed. For instance, we must travel back a very long period of time in order to learn when mats of some kind or other were not in use among some classes of our community; yet a man need not have attained a very patriarchal age in order to remember the time when the cocoanut fibre mats, now so generally in use, were unknown.

It is only a little more than forty years since that the idea of utilising the bristly fibre in which the nut is contained suggested itself to the late Captain Wildey, with whom was also associated in the business the late Mr. Treloar. In 1834, the late Captain Wildey commenced the trade in London. In 1836 he had a cocoanut fibre *dépôt* established in Agar-street, Strand. In 1839, the late Captain R. Logan, another member of the firm, took out a patent for the manufacture of the fibre into certain fabrics. In 1842, at the christening of the Prince of Wales, St. George's Hall was "covered first," as the *Times* announced at the time, "with a matting made of the husk of the cocoanut," and it was by Messrs. Wildey and Co., or, as we should now describe them, Messrs. Treloar and Sons, that this matting was supplied to Messrs. Downing and Co., Knightsbridge. Ever since, the manufacture of the fibre into mats and matting has gone on steadily progressing, till it now holds a foremost place among the industries of the day. Moreover, it has been found applicable to various other purposes, and the value of the quantity imported now represents a very considerable sum of money, while the number of hands employed in the business is also very great. Indeed, it is hardly possible for us nowadays to enter any public or private building but we find the most material evidence of the skill and enterprise exhibited by the firm of Treloar and Sons.

The fibrous coating of the husk which encases the shell of the cocoanut is the material from which these mats are made. This coating consists of a succession of layers of fibres, varying in length from two to twelve inches, and also in thickness and strength, the inner being short and soft, while the middle and outer are long and bristly. In their natural condition they are bound together by a kind of gluten, which must be first removed before they are at all fit for use. When freed of this glutinous

matter, the fibre is called coir. It is in this form the fibre is exported to this country from Cochin and Ceylon, the better quality from the former country, the inferior and darker, but equally durable, from the latter. Before exportation it is spun into yarn, and reaches this country in bales and dholls all ready for immediate use. The first process it undergoes—and we are indebted to the kindness of Messrs. Treloar for the opportunity of watching the several stages of manufacture—is that of sorting it into the different colours. It is then warped into threads, both these processes being performed by women. The thread is then, to use the proper technical expression, "beamed" on to the rollers of the loom. The looms are hand-worked, and the matting is woven in different lengths and widths on different looms. The matting is then rolled by means of machinery, in order that it may be more compact, and so occupy less space. It is then placed in store-rooms, ready for exportation or the home markets.

Mats, however, before they are stored away, pass through yet another stage. They are shorn, the rough upper surface being made as smooth and even as that of a lawn. In fact, the process of shearing is conducted very much on the principle of the lawnmower; and the mat, which was rough in the extreme on its first arrival in the shearing-room, quits it for the storage-room with a beautifully even surface.

In the case of mats with woollen borders, it is only the central portion which is treated as above, the borders being always shorn by hand.

Among the many descriptions to which our attention was drawn, we saw the thick, heavy, skeleton mat, in which the coir is fashioned into a kind of rope or cable, and then twisted hither and thither into a rude but perfectly consistent design. Then there were mats made of the loose fibre on a linen back, while in others the upper portion was of the same fibre, but woven on a coir back. The former were of a finer texture, but the latter, we were given to understand, were stronger and more serviceable. Then there were mats having linen backs, while the surface was entirely wool; and in connection with these must be mentioned some portable seating of wool in various designs on a linen backing, intended for use in church pews.

Among others, we saw some very handsome mats of simple pattern, made of fibre of three different shades of colour. These shades of colour, however, are quite natural; for Messrs. Treloar, with certain exceptions, are careful to use nothing but the undyed fibre, the chemicals used in dyeing and bleaching having been proved to be highly injurious, and rendering the matting far less durable than when the fibre is in its perfectly natural state.

Among other mats with designs more or less appropriate, we noted in particular, in addition to the tricolour mat already mentioned, two of what are called Pompeian mats, with in the one case the figure of a dog and "Cave canem" inscribed upon it; in the other, the simple word "Salve." Others, again, had a bordering of red along the edges, the colours in this instance being the result of dyeing.

This introduction of colour enables the manufac-

turers to plan an infinite variety of designs; but for the reason we have already stated, the use of coloured fibre, except in the way of affording relief, is thought undesirable.

In the way of matting we noticed some of a narrow width—only two quarters—for covering the floors of railway carriages, and another shaped to cover the floor of a billiard-room, or at least that portion of it immediately around the table, so that the players might have something more yielding than deal or oak boards on which to go their rounds. It is needless, however, to dwell on these designs, which it is possible, of course, to multiply to any extent. Let it suffice if we repeat what was said as far back as the year 1862, that these cocoanut fibre mats and matting have earned for themselves a place of honour among our art manufactures. The designs are simple, but invariably appropriate. The better qualities exhibit a fineness of texture which is really wonderful, while all alike are distinguished above all things by their durability.

In noticing the various processes through which the fibre passes in the course of its manufacture into mats, we omitted mention of one. There is a department in the factory which is devoted to “devil-lining” the loose fibre. This is done by means of machinery, the object being to rid the raw material of all its impurities; and in order to accomplish this the more thoroughly, the fibre goes through the “devil” twice. We must also state that quantities of this are used for stuffing mattresses, chairs, sofas, &c., &c. In this case it undergoes a process known as curling—that is, it is made up into a kind of rope or cable. It is then uncurled, well saturated with water, and then baked; after which it is in a fit state for use, and finds a ready market, being for many reasons found preferable for this purpose to wool.

It is known that coir cables are in great demand on account of their great strength and elasticity. It is true that hemp rope will bear a heavier strain than coir rope, but the latter is far more durable, especially under water, the effect of which, in the case of hemp, is to promote decay, while in the case of coir, it apparently makes it stronger and better.

In brushmaking, also, the fibre has been found an excellent substitute for bristles, and is accordingly used very largely in this branch of trade.

But to return to our mat manufacture. Messrs. Treloar have two factories, one of which is located in Holland-street, Blackfriars, and this was the one we inspected, while the other is at the City Prison, Holloway. It may be questionable policy to enter deeply into the important subject of prison labour, at a time when it is in contemplation to bring forward a new measure for the better regulation and government of our prisons. But there are one or two features in connection with the mat-making at Holloway which are worthy a moment's notice.

Messrs. Treloar provide all the material, the plant, and the instructors, of whom there are two; the governor finds the workmen. So far, perhaps, there is nothing to distinguish the mat-making as conducted in Holloway Prison, and the mat-making at Wakefield, and wherever else it may be adopted as a prison trade. But for the work done at Holloway

way, Messrs. Treloar pay the wages of labour just as is done in an ordinary factory. There is, then, a clear profit to the prison to the extent of these wages, and therefore a commensurate relief to the ratepayers, on whom falls the cost of maintaining it.

This is certainly a feature in connection with prison labour which deserves greater attention than, as far as we know, it has received hitherto. The principal objection that has been raised to this kind of labour is this, the terms of competition between the governor of a prison and a private manufacturer are unequal. It is of comparatively no moment to the former what is the cost of the raw material; for, in his case, the cost of production is *nil*—at least as regards the wages of labour. He can thus afford to sell his goods at a far lower rate than the private manufacturer, and prison labour is thus injurious to private interests. In the special case under notice, there is no such injustice. The rate of expenditure is the same in the case of the mats made in Holloway Prison as in Holland-street, while the cost to the ratepayers of maintaining the prison is reduced.

It remains for us to add that, if the distinctions conferred on our manufacturers at various public exhibitions are to be taken as any test of merit—and we think there are few indeed who will question the justice of this test—then Messrs. Treloar and Sons have undoubtedly achieved a series of brilliant successes. Prizes were awarded to them for their cocoanut fibre mats and matting at the London Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862, at those of Paris in 1855 and 1867, at New York in 1853, and at Dublin in 1865. And since the latest of these dates the standard of excellence has been, to say the least, as evenly maintained as ever.

With these facts before us, it is needless to speak further of these mats and matting.

In a Russian Field Hospital.

AFTER having visited some of the less serious cases, I saw some of the worse ones; and here it was that the ghastly side of warfare was visible. Most of the wounds were fractures of limbs from shells of the enemy. But in several cases one or more limbs had been removed.

The saddest case I saw was in the room for dressing wounds. The man had picked up a Turkish shell which had not exploded, and in his desire to open it he was foolish enough to strike it with a stone. He certainly succeeded in opening it, but the result was awful to witness. An arm and a leg were broken, besides the jawbone, and one side of his face, together with his nose, was carried away. It was a ghastly sight, but not more so than one which succeeded it—the funeral of an officer who had died in hospital. He had been examining the enemy's fort from his battery with field glasses, when a shot crushed through his forearm and shoulder blade. He seemed to be doing well, and his wound was healing, when suddenly it opened again, and in a short time he was dead.

In a tent open at two sides, a table covered with white was placed, on which lay a picture of the Virgin and a candle. In front of this was the coffin

—white, with black lines on it—on each side of which was a tall silver candlestick, with a candle burning. The priest, in his stole, chanted the burial service, accompanied by a single voice. Halfway through the service the lid of the coffin was removed, and the corpse was seen in uniform, with an arm and a sleeve crossed over his breast, and the ugliest wound hidden with cotton wool. There was something solemn in the ceremony, and I was much struck with the devout aspect of the Sisters of Charity.

Those who are here now are excellent workers, and even the military hospitals are supplied with Sisters of the Red Cross. Some of them are trained nurses; but, of course, to supply the demand, it was necessary to take one's chance a good deal in this matter, and some have been sent back as incompetent. In fact, many of them had no idea of the kind of work they were to undertake. I believe several joined because the dress was becoming, and others imagined that their duty would be to sit up at night with officers who had colds in their heads, and give them gruel. They had no idea of the blood-stained masses of flesh and bone, hardly to be called living beings, upon whom they would have to attend.

The Yellow Diamond.

CHAPTER II.

"CHLOROFORM!" repeated Mr. Richard and Mrs. Dacre in a breath.

"That accounts for my having slept so like a log," added the former.

These words recalled the curious sensations I had experienced while drowsing in the corridor before Guy's door. Had I, too, been put under the influence of the narcotic, lest I should rouse up and interfere with the thief's purpose? So it would appear.

Calling Guy to one side, I said to him, with a look of suspicion—

"I am tempted to believe you the veriest hypocrite living."

The hand he held out to me shook like a leaf.

"Don't say that, Barton. I can't blame you, though. You have had cause enough to distrust me. But, for Heaven's sake, do not condemn me unheard."

"Then you did not take the diamond?"

"No," shutting his lips sharply together.

"Who did?"

"I know not. But you must look elsewhere for the thief. But for you, I should have stolen the jewel. As it is, this matter is as much a mystery to me as to you."

The earnestness of his tone carried conviction with it.

"Oh, Guy, Guy, you don't know what a load you take from my heart!"

He hid his face, shuddering.

"The temptation was terrible," he said. "A fortune when I needed it so sorely! Do you wonder that I was led to make an effort for it? But that is all past. I will help you find the real culprit, as a sort of atonement."

Two hours later, Detective Saul made his appearance—a small, keen-eyed man, whose glances of themselves were enough to make a guilty person quail. By a few well-directed inquiries, he had soon put himself in possession of all the facts we had to communicate.

"One thing is clear to me," he said, then. "We have not far to go for the thief."

I saw that Eloise turned a shade paler, and stole a furtive glance at me. Pretty Mrs. Dacre looked at the detective with a sudden show of interest.

"Do you mean to say, sir, that the culprit is a member of our own household?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am."

"How dreadful! I can't believe it. There isn't a person I distrust among the whole lot of servants."

"Very likely."

"But, sir," arching her lovely brows, "not one of them knew that the diamond was in the house."

He smiled somewhat quizzically.

"Servants often know more of what is going on than they are given the credit of knowing."

"In general, perhaps. But I really think mine ought to be excepted."

He seemed surprised at her persistency.

"I am glad, at any rate, that nobody has proclaimed to them your discovery of the theft. We may find somebody off his guard, and so get at the truth in a twinkling."

Then he turned to me.

"I must have a look at everybody employed upon the premises. Can you take me round without letting the servants suspect what it is for?"

I promised to do the best I could. We visited the cook, the maids, the coachman, the gardener, in turn. I represented Detective Saul to be a friend on the look-out for just such model help as Mrs. Dacre employed, and so we met with smooth words and friendly looks everywhere. When we had gone the rounds, I paused in the hall to hear the result.

"Well?" I said.

"My recent assertion must be modified somewhat," he returned, with a puzzled air. "The servants know nothing whatever concerning the gem."

"Then somebody saw Mr. Richard take it from the bank, and followed him here?"

He shook his head.

"I doubt that."

"How, then, do you account for its disappearance?" I persisted, half angrily.

"Wait."

He then took two or three turns in the hall, and finally came back to me again.

"Have any indications been discovered to show that the house was broken into last night?"

"No," was my reply.

"I saw two dogs in the yard when I came in. Were they chained last night? Would they not have made a furious uproar if a stranger had trespassed on the grounds?"

I did not know, and went to consult Thomas, the coachman. Coming back, I answered "No" to the first question, and "Yes" to the second.

"Very good," said he, nodding thoughtfully to himself. "The circle of investigation is narrowing rapidly. A few more questions, and I'm done."



There were two ladies in the room above. The blonde is Mrs. Dacre, I take it. Who is the other?"

"Miss Eloise Dacre—Mr. Richard's niece."

"So, so. I never saw the young lady until today. But, mark my words, she knows more about this matter than she is willing to acknowledge."

I gave a violent start.

"Why should you think that?"

"She is labouring under repressed excitement, too violent in its nature to have been wholly occasioned by the mere loss of the diamond. She changed colour more than once while I was in the room with her."

"What can you argue from that?" I exclaimed, showing considerable temper. "Any thoroughly sympathetic woman would have been excited in the same manner. Eloise is innocent as an angel."

"I hope so, I'm sure," he returned, giving me an odd look. "But, mark my words, Miss Dacre may fall to accusing somebody, openly or otherwise, before twenty-four hours have elapsed. If she does, you need look no further for the culprit."

He swung on his heel.

"What possible motive could —" I began angrily, but he was already beyond reach of my voice.

His words set me to thinking. I remembered where I had encountered the girl the previous night, and how startled and unlike herself she had appeared. But I could not for one moment imagine she had taken the jewel. The very idea seemed preposterous. I determined to look much further for a solution of the mystery before believing in her guilt.

While I still loitered in the hall, the parlour door opened, and Mrs. Dacre called to me in her sweetest tones. Of course the summons did not pass unheeded. I went in, and found her seated in a chair by the open window, those floss-like curls looped back from her face, and a lovely colour coming and going in her cheeks. One of her white, jewelled hands was thrown carelessly over a small, richly-bound prayer-book in her lap.

"What is that?" I asked, playfully indicating the book, which had a heavy gold clasp. "Pandora's box?"

I didn't know what there was in my words to startle her so; but all the richness, and brightness, and colour fled suddenly from her face, leaving it as pale as ashes. She drew a long, gasping breath, but did not rally for many minutes.

"Pandora's box," she echoed, with a forced laugh. "What a conceit. And it is only a harmless little prayer-book, you perceive."

She flirted the leaves before my face, as if that was really necessary to convince me of the truth of what she said. Afterward, she made room for me by her side.

"This is a most distressing affair, Mr. Devonshire," she said, thoughtfully.

"You refer to the theft of the diamond, of course?"

"Yes," lifting her eloquent eyes to my face. "Who stole the jewel? I am convinced that the servants are innocent. If an outsider had entered the house, we must have found some trace of him."

"Yes."

"Worse and worse," she murmured, nervously, toying with the gold clasps of the prayer-book. "The mystery is more impenetrable than ever. Of course, your brother Guy did not steal the diamond; I would not insult him with such a suspicion. And yet, there was nobody else, save Eloise and ourselves."

I drew a long breath, feeling that she was still steadily regarding me. One of her delicate hands fluttered into mine.

"Eloise is very partial to jewels," she added, suddenly.

What did she intend to insinuate? I started to my feet, nearly wild with pain. In rising, one of the buttons of my coat became entangled in the lace shading her rounded arms. I stooped to disentangle it, and she turned at the same instant. Of course our movements brought us nearer together. Her scented breath fanned my cheek; her lips were close to my own. I could not resist the impulse to snatch a kiss.

Guy passed along the walk under the window just then. He saw the caress, and his face grew dark and threatening. Mrs. Dacre pushed me from her.

"Go, go," she said, in a whisper. "Guy must not see us together. He is passionate and impetuous. Harm might come of it; and harm to you, Barton!"

It was impossible to misunderstand her half-tender, half-entreating tone. I thought of what Guy had said to me the previous night. Was it possible that this woman loved me?

I left the room, feeling very much disconcerted, for I had meant nothing by the unpremeditated caress. As fate would have it, I met Eloise in the hall, but the girl was looking so white and wretched, that I should scarcely have recognized her. At sight of her pale face everything else was forgotten. I sprang forward, and attempted to catch her in my arms.

"Keep away!" she cried, eluding me.

I stood irresolute.

"Why should you take this matter so to heart?" I said. "Why should you shun *me* so sedulously?"

She did not answer, but began to move rapidly away. That was more than I could endure. I ran after her; I caught hold of her arm.

"You *shall* speak to me, Eloise. You know that I love you! What have I done to deserve such treatment?"

* She turned at last, her lip curling with scorn.

"How dare you!" she cried. "How dare you touch *me*! How dare you speak to *me*!"

For a second or two after this outbreak, I was mute. Surprise had taken away my breath. But it soon came back again.

"Eloise, my regard for you ought at least to insure common civility at your hands."

"Regard!" she broke out, hotly. "Never mention that word to me again. Never come in my sight—never presume to address me. I hate you."

Her vehemence was something alarming. A rich colour now blazed in either cheek, and fire flashed from her eyes. Her tone expressed infinite contempt. She did not give me time to recover myself; she whisked through the nearest door. The

moment it was closed between us, I heard her burst into a passion of tears on the other side.

Here was another mystery—this sudden change in Eloise. Sick and bewildered, I dragged my weary limbs out upon the verandah. The sound of voices reached me presently. I saw Guy and Mrs. Dacre walking along one of the paths in the rose-garden. She had probably left the parlour, by means of the low French window, in order to join him.

Oddly enough, despite the misery I was in, I remarked that she still carried the velvet-bound prayer-book in one hand. Guy seemed to be pleading with her, while she, woman-like, was putting him off under one pretext or another. I began to fear that the woman was a coquette at heart, notwithstanding her Madonna-like face.

I sat in the cool verandah for more than an hour. Guy and our pretty hostess came back at last, apparently on the best possible terms with each other. The frown was wholly gone from my brother's face, and he looked flushed and happy. She had evidently said or done something to encourage the poor fellow.

They passed into the house without having seen me in the shaded corner where I sat. I had risen to follow them, when two persons entered the room, near the open window of which I had been sitting. The next instant I stood transfixed to the spot, spellbound by the words that came to my ears.

"Uncle Richard"—the voice was Eloise's, though hardly a natural tone could be recognized—"Uncle Richard, the search for the diamond must be stopped! *Must* be, I say!"

Then Mr. Dacre replied—

"Are you crazy, Eloise? That jewel is worth a fabulous sum."

"I don't care. The quest must be given up all the same. And be sure of one thing, Uncle Richard, that you send that man, Detective Saul, out of the house as soon as possible."

"Why?"

"He may make some discovery, otherwise, that had better not be brought to light."

Mr. Richard gave a grunt of amazement.

"I shall not give up my precious jewel just to gratify the foolish whim of a girl," he replied, half angrily.

"It is not that," she cried, vehemently. "Must I tell you—oh, must I tell you? It is such a terrible secret to reveal. You will keep it, Uncle Richard—keep it for my sake?"

She spoke in a wild, pleading way that absolutely took away my breath. Mr. Richard must have been affected by it, for he said, soothingly—

"Yes, yes, my child."

A quick cry escaped her lips.

"Remember, you have promised, and I shall not release you from that promise. Now, if I tell you who stole the diamond, will you give me your word of honour not to proceed publicly against that person?"

"Yes," he replied.

Evidently he did not believe she knew anything about it, and answered in that way merely to pacify her.

She hesitated a little, as if to gather resolution for what she had to say.

"In the first instance," she began, at last, "you intended to sleep with the diamond under your pillow last night?"

"I did."

"Who advised you differently?"

"Barton Devonshire."

"I thought so."

Something in her tone seemed to impress him.

"Why have you questioned me?" he asked.

"Listen," she cried, speaking sharp and quick. "Barton Devonshire had a purpose to serve in the advice he gave. He stole the diamond!"

I don't know who was most confounded by this revelation, Mr. Richard or myself. There was a deep silence, that lasted several minutes. The blood ran cold in my veins. I could not have stirred from the spot had my life been the forfeit. The bare idea that she should accuse me of the crime stupefied, stunned me.

Mr. Richard found voice at last.

"Impossible!" he gasped.

"Would to God it were!" she broke out, passionately. "But the proofs are convincing enough. I found him in the corridor last night, with his hand on the knob of the ante-room door. He seemed very much startled when I came upon him. This morning I discovered in front of his bed-room door a piece of sponge similar to that left on your dressing table, and betraying the same odour. He chloroformed you, and then secured the key of the es-critoir."

She hesitated long enough to gather breath. Then she went on again, in the same rapid, excited tone—

"I would have kept the secret of his infamy if I could. I would even have spared him the humiliating knowledge that it was known to anybody but God and myself. Since that sharp-eyed detective has been introduced into the house, no choice is left me. If you don't binder it, Mr. Saul will get at the truth, and blazon it to the whole world. That must not be. You must spare Barton the disgrace. And, that you may spare him, I have told you what I know!"

She said no more. With the last word, she must have hurried from the room in her feverishly impatient way, dragging Mr. Richard after her. With her voice no longer ringing in my ears, little by little my wonted coolness came back, one by one my senses slowly rallied from the shock of the revelation she had made. I leaped through the open window, eager to confront her, that I might boldly deny the accusation.

It was too late—the room was empty. I paused in the middle of the floor, staring about me stupidly. Of a sudden, Detective Saul's words recurred to my mind. "Miss Dacre may fall to accusing somebody, openly or otherwise, before twenty-four hours have elapsed." He was a true prophet—she had accused me. But I could not and would not believe she had done it to screen herself.

Rallying from this thought, I moved to the door, and opened it. A slight, graceful figure came flying along the hall—the figure of Mrs. Dacre. She still

carried the prayer-book, as if it were something too precious to lay aside. She saw me, and sprang forward with a stifled cry, rushing into my arms. The next instant [she had thrown her jewelled hands over my shoulder, and was sobbing like a child on my breast.

"Oh, Barton, Barton!" she moaned, "they are saying such dreadful things about you—Eloise and Richard! They don't know—but I heard it all. Eloise says—good God! how can I tell you?—she says that you stole the diamond! But I will never believe it—never! Absurd! I would sooner think evil of anybody else. Barton, they may all turn against you—they may all set you down as vile and wicked, but I never will! I will still be your friend and comforter, if you will only let me."

All this was uttered between choking sobs that nearly took her breath away. Her evident distress touched me to the heart. I was kissing her flossy hair, and murmuring words of endearment, when heavy footsteps came striding along the hall. Before I could put her away, Guy confronted us, his handsome face livid with passion.

"Traitors!" he hissed, tearing the weeping woman from my embrace, "is this the way you keep your promises? Oh, my God! is there no honour in you—no sense of what is womanly and true?"

He fairly shook her in his blind jealousy and rage. He held her off at arm's length, glowering at her with black brows. She cowered like a frightened child. The prayer-book, which she had held securely enough up to this moment, slid from her grasp, and fell to the floor. He moved forward a step or two, laughing madly, and deliberately crushed the costly trifle with his heel.

I shall never forget the change that came over her face at that moment. She grew ghastly pale, with a pallor that had something unearthly about it. Her eyes looked like those of a wild creature held at bay; they blazed with passion and fury and fear. She seemed all at once to be transformed into a beautiful fiend. She struggled and writhed in his embrace, shrieking for him to let her go, and stretching out her milky white hands imploringly.

"My book, my book! For God's sake, give it to me!"

I sprang forward. The peculiar sound made by the crushing of the velvet cover of the prayer-book had not escaped my observation. A wild, improbable thought flashed upon my brain. Instead of resigning the shattered wreck to the struggling woman, I began to inspect it closely. It was as I suspected—the covers were hollow, making convenient receptacles for any small article that was to be hidden away. Even as I looked, from some unsuspected recess a shining atom, fairly scintillant with light, rolled into my hand. The diamond—found at last. The haunting mystery made clear.

Mrs. Dacre knew from the stifled exclamation I gave, that all was discovered. From that moment she ceased to struggle, but lay very quietly in Guy's arms. Looking around, after watching her for a brief space in unfeigned bewilderment, I saw Mr. Richard and Eloise standing near, drawn thither by the unusual disturbance, no doubt. Mrs. Dacre be-

held them at the same instant with myself. She lifted her graceful head.

"Aye, stare at me," she said, weakly, "for I am a thief. The diamond was so beautiful, and it meant money—such a fabulous sum! I couldn't resist the temptation, and I didn't try very hard. I thought you might like me a little better, Barton, if I were rich and courted. It isn't altogether my fault that I have been so wicked. My husband should have left me more money—then I could have withstood the temptation. I know I have been weak, and frivolous and vain; but it is too late even to feel sorry. But I have made a very proper confession of my guilt. Take me away, Guy."

She was irresistible, even in her degradation. I began to comprehend her character as I had never comprehended it before. Guy had stood rooted to the floor, swiftly passing changes whirling over his face. Now he hesitated a little, drawing her more closely to his heart at last. Giving me a look of blended entreaty and despair, he quitted the apartment, bearing the wretched woman in his arms.

The scene had unnerved me. I sank into a chair the moment they were gone. I heard the soft rustling of silk close beside me, but did not look up. A tiny hand was pushed into mine; presently—

"Barton," whispered a voice that thrilled me as none other had power to do, "I thought you stole the jewel. Can you ever forgive me for the unjust suspicion?"

Eloise was on the floor at my feet, sobbing pitifully. I stooped and kissed her.

"My darling!" was all that I could say.

While she clung to me, I thought that not for a thousand diamonds would I pass through such another experience as the last twenty-four hours had held.

Mrs. Dacre was not seen by any of us again that night. When the next morning dawned, we found that she had fled, and that Guy had gone with her. Later in the day, a letter was put into my hands. Here are the closing lines—

"I firmly believe, dear Barton, that Clarice has been more weak than culpable, and—I love her! She clings to me like a child who has nobody else to right its wrongs. I shall make her my wife. She will get over her *penchant* for you by and by, and be all that heart could wish. We shall never come back to Fair Oaks. Tell Mr. Richard so; and tell him, for his dead brother's sake, he must not seek to punish a woman who is punished sufficiently already."

"GUY DEVONSHIRE."

Could he be happy with a woman who had deliberately imposed upon us all to the very last? Perhaps a change had been wrought in her heart, after all. I hoped it might be so.

THE END.

WHEN you see a pompous, important-looking personage whom you know to be unimportant, how quickly comes into your mind the question which Charles Lamb put: "I beg your pardon, sir, but are you anybody in particular?"

Horatius II. in Cheapside.

IT was the Mayor and Elders,
By this and that they swore,
That Bennett of the clock and bells
Should office hold no more—
By this and that they swore it,
And at their trysting-day,
They bade their messengers go forth,
East and west, and south and north—
Their dictum for to say.

East and west, and south and north,
The words went swift and fast,
That Bennett, though elected, he
Forth from the court was cast;
Though alderman by vote of ward—
Ex-sheriff—deputee—
No seat should he among them have,
Or eke Lord Mayor should be.

Then out spake stout John Bennett—
The man of wheels and works—
“The conduct of the aldermen
“Is worse than heathen Turks”.
“I am not one to be afraid
“Of facing fearful odds;
“Nor yet the man to be set down
“By any Lord Mayor’s nods.
“Go, send out bills—advertisements—
“Each ‘lectioneering plan,
“While all the men in ward of Cheap
“I’ll canvass as I can.
“In this new fight, the City
“May well be stopped by three:
“Now who will stand on either hand,
“And fight the Guild with me?”

Then out spoke stout old Sidney—
An alderman was he—
“I will abide on thy right side,
“And fight the Guild with thee.”
And spake the smooth man, Morley,
An Elder, too, was he—
“Lo! I will stand at thy left hand,
“And fight the Guild with thee.”
“As thou sayest,” quoth Sir Thomas White—
“As thou sayest let it be.”

And for a fresh election then
Went forth the dauntless three.
For the City, in her squabbles,
Spared neither time nor gold,
Nor noise, nor strife, nor fork, nor knife,
In the brave days of old.

Now while the three were writing,
And using sealing wax,
The Guild it was the very first
Another man to ax
To step into the breach of Cheap;
But Waddell cried “Enough!”
So Breffit, of another ward,
Come forward, looking chuff.
“Down with him!” cried old Carden,
With a smile on his red face,

“I’d like to give him fourteen days
“In quite another place.”
But stout Sir John, his dexter hand
Then hanging by his side,
Raised with the thumb unto his nose,
And fingers stretching wide.

Thrice looked he at John Bennett,
Thrice chewed the words he’d said,
And thrice came on in fury,
And thrice turned back in dread;
And red with rage and hatred,
Prayed for some dreadful day,
When John should be before him brought,
And forty shillings pay.

The fight was long and sturdy,
As such fights fain must be;
But without e’en a sign of fear
Kept on the dauntless three.
And one by one they tumbled
The champions of the Guild,
Till they before the doughty knight
Lay in the ink they spilled.

And now he heads the long poll,
Now safe ashore he stands,
Now round him press the fathers
To shake his hearty hands;
And now, with noise of cheering
And sounds of shouting loud,
They took him through the ward of Cheap,
Borne by the noisy crowd.

They gave him of the turtle,
That is of civic right,
As much as two stout seasoned Mayors
Could gorge from morn till night;
And they’ll make him Mayor of London,
And set him up on high,
And there he’ll stand in great Guildhall
If this bold scribe don’t lie.

And in the House of Mansion,
Plain for all folk to see,
John Bennett of the ten pound watch,
With hair all curlicie.
For in Zadkiel it is written,
In letters all of gold,
How brave Sir John means Mayor to be
Ere eighteen hundred’s old.

Re Dulwich College.

SAID Mr. Marshall, of Dulwich College—
“That man gets drunk to my certain knowl-

edge.” Said Mr. Hume—“That’s a piece of fiction!” And he served his friend with some legal diction.

Said the Lord Chief Justice—“Here is the case: “Hume was said to be drunk in a certain place. “If he was not drunk, why the case is fudge.” “Forty shillings and costs, then, my lord, the judge.”

It is a question worthy of careful investigation, whether a person whose voice is broken is not all the better competent to sing “pieces.”

The Egotist's Note-book.

PRAY, young ladies, when you are out on your travels, do not take a fancy to handsome young foreigners, and trust them with all the pretty little secrets of your hearts set down on paper, and beginning—"My own love," and "My dearest darling." I say this, because there is a case in progress where one handsome young foreigner has been committed for trial on a charge of trying to obtain money—some hundreds—by threatening to show a trusting maiden's letters if the money was not paid. We call young Englishmen scoundrels who do such things. What the jury will think of the foreign gentleman remains to be seen.

Who would not be a cricket reporter? This is the way it is done as recorded in the daily paper account of a late match:—"Mr. Ridley drove Hearne for 4, and hit him to leg for another 4. Remnant took Mr. Foord-Kelcey's place at 41, and Mr. Ridley drove him for 4. Mr. Duncan then drove Hearne to the off for 4—50 up. Bourke went on for Hearne at 51, and after some time Mr. Duncan cut him late for 3, and cut Remnant hard for 4. At 74 Hearne took Remnant's place, and Mr. Shaw went on at the opposite wicket. Mr. Ridley snicked Mr. Shaw for 4, but at 80 was bowled, leg stump out of the ground, for 39, an excellent innings. Mr. C. Lucas now came in, and cut Mr. Shaw neatly for 4, and Mr. Duncan served the professional the same way, and then snicked Hearne." I wonder how Messrs. Shaw and Hearne liked being "snicked."

Will our descendants believe a hundred years hence that we left a structure across one of our busiest streets in so dangerous a state that it was shored up, and policemen were stationed to see that vehicles passed at a walking pace? Yet so it is; month after month goes by and yet Temple Bar stands ready to fall, while sundry masculine old women discuss pro and con, or make up their minds when it is to come down.

One of the drollest things out is the fact that, from a Pharisaical zeal for showing up the wickedness of that notorious work, "The Priest in Absolution," the vendors of a religious paper have got themselves into difficulties with the police. Fancy a Christian something or another being objectionable for printing immoral extracts!

Would it not be a little more agreeable to the readers of the *Daily Telegraph* if its proprietors would leave out that bombastic notice of a quarter of a column over the leader, and replace it with a little news? No one wants to know how many thousands are printed, and the big type "circulation" has grown to be a bore.

That jovial widower, the Lord Mayor, has been enjoying himself down at Merthyr Tydvil. His duty was to distribute the prizes and rewards to the people who behaved so bravely at the Rhodda Valley accident. The report says that his lordship created no

little amusement by saluting the nurses with a kiss. Only fancy the pride of those simple Welsh women—to have been kissed by a real live Lord Mayor!

Piron, the French author, having been taken up by the watchman of the night in the streets of Paris, was carried on the following morning before the lieutenant of police, who haughtily interrogated him concerning his business or profession.

"I am a poet, sir," said Piron.

"Oh, oh—a poet, are you?" said the magistrate. "I have a brother who is a poet."

"Then we are even," said Piron; "for I have a brother who is a fool."

The interest of the public in vivisection seems to be growing intense, probably on account of the wonderful rabbit and dog caricatures so abundantly posted on our hoardings. A tremendous impetus, too, seems to have been given by a page of illustrations in the *Police News*—that most refined of our illustrated papers. So great is the feeling on this question, that the other day, when the annual meeting was held at St. James's Hall, nearly a dozen people were present. They were spread out so as to make the most of them, but they did not fill the hall, which will probably hold two thousand.

The last new sensation seems to be the arrival of Captain Crapo and his wife in a little one-and-a-half ton boat at Penzance. They sailed over from America, taking forty-nine days to do it, when they could have come by steamer in twelve. But they sailed over in a little boat, and the captain is spoken of as a hero. It seems to me a useless, maniacal feat, and as if the American had been trying for forty-nine days to commit suicide, and failed.

People used to say, "Have you seen the Shah?" It seems now that we have people among us who would very much like to set eyes upon his Persian Royal Highness; for he went off without paying some of his debts. One tradesman writes to complain of having made a jewel case, which he has now on his hands. There has been some talk of the Shah coming again: it is to be hoped it will be with a full purse and a strong sense of honour.

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A Poacher's Dream.

IT'S a many years ago now, sir ; and of course all that time deadens your feelings, and makes you hard, 'specially if it's been passed in a prison. I can talk about it now ; but there was a time I could not even think of it without getting so mad that, if I had been one of them foreigners, I should have got some charcoal, and smoked myself dead.

You see, it was all along of that keeper, Jenkins, and he was as black a scoundrel as ever got people to believe him an honest man. We always hated each other, after something as happened one day. It was one evening, and I was going home from work—that was, doing up some one's garden; for I've always been a gardener, 'cept when I was on the treadmill. I was going through the field that's at the back of Squire Watt's preserves, as he calls them—the old squire, it's his son that's squire now—when I hears a sort of cry that sounded like "Help!" come out of the wood. There was only a hedge between it and the field, and I scrambled through a gap, and ran to where the sound had come from, and there was Jenkins and a young girl I had seen once before. He'd got his arm round her, and was holding her, while she was fighting hard to get away. Just as I come up she gave another cry, and I didn't stop to say anything to him, but just knocked him down; when he lay quite still on the ground, pretending to be stunned.

"Thank you," she says, quietly, but trembling a little. "I am very much obliged to you," and she gives me her hand, smiled, says "Good evening," and goes quickly away.

As soon as she was quite gone, he picked himself up, looking as black as thunder, and says he—

"Jem Smith, I know you, and I sha'n't forget you. And I sha'n't forget *this*."

And he touches his forehead where I'd hit him.

"I hope you won't; and that it'll be a lesson to you," I says.

And then, knowing as I was trespassing, I thought it best to be off home.

After that, I never met him but he glowered at me, as much as to say, "Wait a bit."

The name of the girl was Mary Dennis, and she was housemaid at the Rectory. I often used to meet her by accident; and as she was always willing to stop and speak, I got into the way of going out on purpose to meet her every evening. She was a bright-looking girl, with soft dark eyes and soft dark hair; and she had a great deal more sense than any other girl I ever saw. Well, one day she told me that the keeper chap had been following her again, that he had wanted to marry her, and when she refused him had been rude, and threatened to make her repent it.

"Mary," says I, "I'll tell you what would be the best thing to do. Be Mrs. Smith."

And before she went home, we'd settled it. She was to be my wife in a month from that, and to come and live at the cottage with me and mother. I saw her back as far as the rectory gate; and when she had gone in, I turned round, and there was Jenkins looking over the stile on the other side

of the road. It wasn't too dark to see who it was, nor yet to see that he shook his fist at me.

We was married at the time we fixed; and, as we rarely saw Jenkins, we had almost forgotten him before many months were gone. We were very happy for a whole year, and then a little bit of a baby came, that mother used to make a tremendous fuss over. But after that things began to go wrong. I had three to work for instead of one, and yet I couldn't get near so much work as I used to. People who used to have me regular to do their gardens took to having a different man when they could get him, and only put up with me when they couldn't. I tried to get other work, but no one would take me. I became sure at last of one thing—that was, that it was Jenkins's doing. He had told different people that I was one of the poachers who had been making good bags of the squire's game of a night.

And so it came about that one day, when it was broiling hot, I was going home at about twelve o'clock to get some dinner, through the very field where I had heard Mary call out for help. I had been thinking about what I had heard of people going out to America or Australia, where they say it is as easy as possible to get a living, and was wondering whether we could get out there, when I began to feel giddy, the sun was so strong. I had some distance to walk yet, and so looked round for some shady place, where I could sit down for a few minutes. On one side of me was the field, glaringly bright, with scarcely a foot of shadow; on the other side was the wood, and it looked so cool and shady under the trees that I wouldn't think about not having any business there, but just goes and gets through, and sits down there. I went bang off to sleep in about a minute, and got dreaming all kinds of things. I was wandering through a forest, like the squire's preserves grown much bigger, with a gun in my hand, bent on killing something to take home to the wife and little one, because I thought they were starving. But, though all kinds of strange animals ran past me, I could not raise my gun to take aim. The place seemed full of living things, but something seemed always to keep me from firing. At last I came to where, from the branch of a tree, hung a fine kind of short-horned deer or roebuck.

"Some one has been here and shot it," I says to myself, "and they've hung it there, meaning to come back and fetch it in a day or two. Well, whoever it belongs to, I'll have it and take it home, sooner than they shall want food any longer."

The next minute some one says—

"Why, it's Jem Smith!"

I jumps up with a start, and there was two of the gamekeepers standing looking at me—Jenkins and another, one as I didn't know the name of.

"So it's you, is it, Smith?" says Jenkins, with a sort of sneer—"it's you as sets wires for the hares."

"No, it isn't," says I ; "being here doesn't make me a poacher."

"What's this, then?" says the other, and he picks up a hare from just where I'd been lying.

"You're caught this time, my friend," says Jenkins. "So you'll take it home, will you, sooner than they shall want for food?"

I must have said that out loud when I was dreaming; for they had both heard it, and used it against me afterwards as evidence.

I went home, then, and told them all about it.

"Don't be afraid, Jem," says Mary, "they can't hurt you, because you didn't do it."

Not long after I got back, two policemen came, with Jenkins and the other keeper, to take me into custody. I didn't make any bother about it; what was the good?

"You won't believe it, Mary, will you?" I says, "no matter what they say?"

"No, darling, I won't," she says, clinging to me, and trying so hard to keep back the tears, and look as though she wasn't afraid, that I felt rather soft myself.

So I says—

"I'm ready."

And they took me off to the station.

Mary was there when the case came on, the little thing lying in her arms. Even then, standing in the dock, I could not help thinking how she was altered since we were married—from a fresh, happy-looking girl, she had changed into a pale, thoughtful woman. I hardly heard all the evidence; but I know that Jenkins swore that he had suspected me to be one of a gang of poachers for a long while. Everything went against me. I pleaded not guilty; but the magistrate said he thought the case clearly proved, and he sentenced me to six months' hard labour.

I looks at Mary, feeling stunned like, and sees her looking after me so pitiful and despairing that I thought I should go mad. How they was to get a living without me, I couldn't think.

When the six months was over, I came back home.

It was June when I went, it was December when I came back. There was snow everywhere, and it was snowing when I got to our cottage. I see the window while I was some way off, the light shining out of it so bright and warm; but all the same, I felt kinder afraid to go in, for it didn't seem likely as I should find them as I left there. Well, when I got up to the door, instead of knocking, I went and looked in at the window. There was a man and woman sitting together, and children playing about; but I'd never seen them before.

I had to stop a bit, and lean against the windowsill; and then I goes to the door, and asks for Mrs. Smith as used to live there. . . . My mother was in the workus, Mary was lying in the churchyard, with one baby on her breast, and the other sleeping by her side.

I had some sort of an illness, but I don't remember much about it. Those people in our cottage took care of me, and nursed me through it; and as soon as I could I went to my mother. From what she told me, I got to feel so that I could have murdered Jenkins. He had got me out of the way, and then he could persecute my poor girl as much as he chose. He had determined to make her repent of saying "No" to him, and spread things abroad about her, so that she could get no one to give her work of any kind. She was told to apply to the parish,

and— Well, you can guess the rest, sir; I can't talk about it, even now.

A day or two after I see my mother, some fellows asked me to join them; they were going poaching at Squire Watts's as there would be no moon that night. Once I should have been ready to knock a man down for asking me; but then I said I would at once, because I thought I should see Jenkins. We had only just got into the wood, when we found some one had been peaching on us—they said afterwards it was me, but I hadn't thought of such a thing, else perhaps I might—for the keepers were on the watch. There was a regular fight. Some of the men got off; one or two were caught. I had knocked one of the keepers down, and was trying to get off before I was recognized, when some one seizes me by the collar, and says—

"Not so fast, my fine fellow."

I knew the voice directly, and then, I don't hardly know how, only that in less than a minute Jenkins was lying quite still on the ground. I didn't move or try to get away, but just stood still and let them take me.

My sentence that time was fourteen years, for Jenkins was half killed. I'm out on ticket-of-leave now, and just get enough gardens to do to keep me out of the workus. But, as you say, sir, it isn't every one would have me if they'd heard my story.

A Perfect Woman.

A WIFE-SEEKING and methodical youth, who has occasionally escorted a young lady home on Sunday evenings, and gone in for supper, after performing both services last Sunday night, suddenly said to her—

"Do you talk in your sleep?"

"Why—no," she answered, in surprise.

"Do you walk in your sleep?" he next inquired.

"No, sir."

He moved his chair an inch closer, and with increased interest asked—

"Do you snore?"

"No," she hastily replied, looking uneasily at him.

At this reply his eyes fairly sparkled. His lips eagerly parted, and as he gave his chair another hitch, he briskly inquired—

"Do you throw the combings of your hair in the basin?"

"What?" she asked, with a blank face.

He repeated the question, although with increased nervousness.

"No, I don't," she answered, in some haste.

Again his chair went forward, while his agitation grew so great that he could scarcely maintain his place upon it, as he further asked—

"Do you clean the comb when you have done?"

"Of course I do," she said, staring at him with all her might.

In an instant he was on his knees before her with his hands outstretched.

"I love you," he passionately cried. "I give my whole heart up to you. Love me and I will be your slave. Love me as I love you, and I will do everything on earth for you. Oh, will you take me to be

your lover, your husband, your protector, your everything?"

It was a critical moment for a young woman of her years, but she was equal to the emergency, as a woman generally is, and accepted him.

Beaux of Former Times.

WE much question whether the celebrated Beau Brummel and even the equally celebrated Romeo Coates were not absolutely mere Quakers in their dress compared with some of the distinguished dressers of the former days. Sir Walter Raleigh wore a white satin pinked vest, close-sleeved to the wrist; over the body a brown doublet, finely powdered, and embroidered with pearl. In the feather of his hat a large ruby, and a pearl drop at the bottom of the sprig in place of a button; his trunk hose or breeches, with his stockings and ribbon garters, fringed at the end, all white; and buff shoes with white ribbon. On great Court days his shoes were so gorgeously covered with precious stones as to have exceeded the value of £6,000, and he had a suit of armour of solid silver, with a sword and belt blazing with diamonds, rubies, and pearls.

King James's favourite, the Duke of Buckingham, could afford to have his diamonds tacked on so loosely that when he chose to shake off a few on the ground he obtained all the fame he desired from the pickers-up, for our duke never condescended to accept what he himself had dropped. His cloaks were trimmed with great diamond buttons, and he wore diamond hat bands, cockades, and earrings yoked with great ropes and knots of pearls. He had twenty-seven suits of clothes made—the richest that embroidery, lace, silk, velvet, silver, gold, and gems could contribute—one of which was a white uncut velvet, set all over, both suit and cloak, with diamonds, valued at fourscore thousand pounds, besides a feather stuck all over with diamonds, as were also his sword, girdle, hat, and spurs.

When the difference in the value of money is considered, the sums thus ridiculously squandered in dress must have been prodigious.

Brilliant Cross-examination.

"NOW, sir," said a lawyer, with somewhat of a reputation as a criminal pleader—"if you lost six chickens out of forty, I'd like to know how you recognized it?"

"Well," responded the witness, "I went out to the hen-roost late at night, and saw that there was not as many chickens as when I saw them last in the afternoon."

"How did you recognize that they were missing—by their countenances?"

The witness scratched his head for a reply; when the judge interfered, and said it was impossible for the witness to answer that question.

"Why," said his lordship, "it seems to me you might as well think of recognizing a lot of glass bottles by their countenances after the bottles had been taken away."

The cross-examination was brought to a summary close.

A Border Story.

HE has been dust and ashes for a hundred years. I have never seen his name in any record of his adopted state, nor heard it classed with the heroes of the old perilous days. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the story of Dave Thompson, the Scotch emigrant of St. George, is worthy of remembrance.

He came to the settlement about the year 1750. He soon became skilled in woodcraft and Indian fighting, and during the French war entered the service of Eli James, a well-to-do settler, who had a farm and a sawmill on the river, and also a young daughter called Hannah—the prettiest creature to be found in all Maine. She numbered among her lovers every marriageable man in the settlement—Dave Thompson among the rest; but, though she had smiles in plenty for all the others, for him she had nothing but frowns. He was a brawny, loutish fellow, with a shock of red hair, and a square, reticent face, bashful among women, and bold among men. Ill fared his suit with pretty, wilful Hannah.

"You are as gloomy as an owl, Dave," she would scoff, gaily. "One might as well set up the tongs in the chimney-corner for company. But Reuben Kidd and the young men at the garrison—they never tire one; they never sit and glower at a body without speaking, the whole evening through."

Dave coloured to the roots of his red hair.

"Aweel, they maun e'en act out their ainsels, Hannah; and I maun do the same. I canna talk to ye as to ithers—my heart swells up big into my throat, and chokes the words back. They be braw callants down to the garrison—Rube Kidd among the rest; but, hoot, lassie! is there one of them a' whose soul yearns ower ye like to mine?"

Hannah did not find such silent devotion to her liking, so she merely tossed her yellow hair, and went on with her knitting.

But troublous times had come upon the settlement. No work could be done in the fields except under a strong guard. Frightened by constantly increasing outrages, the settlers began to abandon their homes, and fly to the forts and block-houses. One of the last to leave was Eli James. He clung to his own hearth with great tenacity. He was old and sorely troubled in spirit about Hannah.

"It's time for ye to choose a husband, my girl!" he said to her one night, when they were all sitting about the fire. "What's to become of ye, left all alone in times like these, when I die? Here's Reuben and here's Dave—I've not a straw to choose betwixt them. Ye need a husband, and they've both asked ye to marry, so take one or the other, lass, an make an end of it."

Hannah hung her pretty head lower over her knitting, and grew red and pale by turns. On one side of her sat Reuben Kidd, a fine, handsome fellow, with the warm breath of the cattle-house still clinging about him, and on the other was Dave Thompson, his loaded rifle leaning against the wall beside him, the firelight playing on his square, plain face.

"Would to heaven you'd listen to that, Hannah," said Reuben. "Why not to-night as well as any

other time? If Dave is willing to abide by your choice, so also am I."

"I'm willing and mair," Dave answered, slowly. "Hoot, lassie, take me now, or leave me. It's the fearing and waiting that kills."

He rose to his feet, Reuben did likewise, and Hannah pushed back her stool also, and stood between them, rapidly changing colour, and looking from one to the other like a startled fawn.

"Ye needn't fear to speak out," said her old father; "they are good lads both, and too fond of each other to be parted by a little chit like you. Follow your own heart, girl—follow your own heart."

With a little sob, Hannah ran up to handsome Reuben, and dropped her rosy face against his shoulder.

"I choose you," she stammered, then struggled out of his rapturous embrace to look back at poor Dave. "I'm sorry," she said; "I didn't mean to hurt you. I like you—I love Reuben—I hope you'll forgive me."

He looked a shade paler and graver, but that was all.

"There's nought to forgive, lassie. Don't ye mind me. I ken love don't come or gae wi' the asking. God be wi' ye both. I think I'll gae out and take a turn across the clearing. None o' ye need sit up for me."

He shook hands with Kidd, slung his rifle over his shoulder, and departed, and was seen no more that night.

Down on the river's bank, in a clump of bushes, he lay till day-dawn. The loons dipped with unearthly screams around him, the wind sighed, the stealthy Indian crept near, intent on midnight massacre; but poor Dave, dead to everything save the cry of his own heart, lay motionless and quite unheeding, with his face in the dust.

The next day, the Indians burnt James' sawmill on the river, and killed two settlers at work near it. A retreat to the garrison was now imperative. Dave Thompson carried the palsied old man thither on his back, and Hannah and Reuben followed with the household gods. All that night they heard the redskins outside the stockade mocking the watch, and the barking of the dogs.

At the fort, Hannah, yielding to the importunities of father and lover, began to prepare for her marriage. And one summer night the old Scotch parson got out his Bible and text-book, and the harassed, anxious garrison made ready for a festival.

It had been a day of great peace and quiet. No Indians had been seen or heard anywhere about the fort. Twilight drew on. The loons began their cries, and the frogs their croaking in the lowlands. The canny Scotch folks, on first settling down in the wilderness, were greatly terrified at these noises, and used to pray fervently to be delivered from "witches and warlocks, and the things that cried 'Boo' in the meadows."

Those were practical days. The men had not yet returned from the fields; and although it lacked but an hour or two to the wedding, Hannah took her pail with the other women, and went out to milk the cows in a green lane just outside the stockade. They were hard at work, their laughter and chatter

filling the air, when one of the women named Margaret Patterson became alarmed by a sudden movement in a clump of bushes bordering the lane.

"What is that?" she called to Hannah James, who was milking nearest of all to the suspicious point.

"I see nothing," answered Hannah.

"It's Rube, maybe, creeping up to scare us," said another.

Hannah finished her task, then rose from the milking-stool, and went towards the bushes.

"Come, Rube," she laughed—"come now, and take the pails."

Then, peering shyly over, she saw, lying in his blanket, a plumed and painted Indian, with a gun cocked in his hand.

The eyes of the savage and those of the girl met. The next instant, a screech—a war-whoop, as if all the fiends of the lower regions had broken loose, rang through the lane. The redskins leaped out of their ambush, firing on both women and cattle. Margaret Patterson fell dead. The others, closely pursued by the foe, turned, and fled for dear life toward the fort. One woman, named Gamble, ran the whole length of the lane, leaped a pair of bars, and got safely inside the gate, never spilling a drop from her brimming pail, or even knowing that she had it in her hand, till all was over.

With all speed the gate of the garrison was closed, and a gun fired to alarm the men in the field. After that, it was discovered that out of the band of milkers two were missing—Margaret Patterson, who had been shot in the lane, and Hannah James, whom nobody remembered to have seen after the first alarm. Up came the men from the river-bank without encountering any Indians. On hearing the news, they sallied out in a body to search the lane. There they found the cows, and the mutilated body of the Patterson woman, but no Hannah—no trace of Hannah, nor yet of the Indians. Knowing, however, the treachery of the foe, and fearful of ambush, or an attack on the fort, the men drove the cows inside the stockade, and retreated after them, thus virtually abandoning the missing girl to her fate.

There was no wedding at the garrison that night. Reuben Kidd sat with his sorrowful head bowed in his hands, and wept and groaned, and would not be comforted. In the midst of his grief, some one drew near and put a hand on his shoulder. He looked up, and saw the grave face of Dave Thompson.

"I ken how it is, mon," he said, slowly. "They will take her to the French in Canada, or they will e'en kill her on the way. In either case, ye maun be up and doing."

"I!" said Reuben. "What can one man do against a thousand? They are miles away by this time, and there's no force on the river large enough to pursue them. This is hard luck, God knows, and all things ready for my marriage this same night."

Dave did not answer at once. He stood and looked at Reuben, not with angry, but only grave and thoughtful eyes.

"Ye've thought o' no way, then, to help her?"

"Way! There is no way. One might think you'd

been long enough in the wilderness to understand that. But you're a dull fellow, Dave—a very dull fellow. I'll never see her face again, and my heart's broken."

Dave went away, and left him sobbing and groaning; but at daybreak the next morning he appeared again before the disappointed bridegroom. He was armed and equipped, as if for a journey.

"Ye ken, Rube," he began, "that I loved her, too. Aweel, I canna eat and sleep like ither men, and think o' her with them red deils, suffering God only knows what. I'm e'en going to seek her, mon—to bring her back to ye safe and sound again—God willing. There be some traps and other skins here o' mine. If ye dinna see me nor hear o' me ere a year's gone, ye may e'en take them for your own, Rube. And now, good-bye. Jist say to the ither folk that I've gone on a little tramp all by myself, and no mair!"

With that he walked out of the fort in the early morning, crossed the green lane, and plunged into the forest. He carried his rifle, his knife, his ammunition, a scanty stock of provisions, and in a leathern pouch about his body fifty hard dollars—all the money he had in the world. Thus, taking his life in his hand, Dave Thompson set forth in search of Hannah.

About twenty miles from St. George, he struck the trail of her captors. He followed it all that day without overtaking them, until he came to a spot where the party seemed to have divided. Here he found one trail extending northward, and another westward. He took the northward track, and pursued it tirelessly through miles upon miles of unbroken wilderness.

He came up with the Indians one dark, stormy night, when they had been drinking too freely of the settlers' fire-water. They had made their camp in a lonely glade, at the head of a woodland stream. Dave found them, one and all, fast asleep. Cautiously he crept up to their dying fire. They were lying stretched around it—twenty savages in feathers and war-paint, but no Hannah. Thompson looked and looked again, but in vain. She was not there—he had followed the wrong trail. There was nothing for him to do but retrace the weary way he had come, and pursue that other party who had gone westward.

Nothing daunted, he turned about, and with great difficulty returned to the spot where the two trails had baffled him; but, alas! storm and rain had now quite obliterated the one leading westward. Thompson found himself in the predicament of a mariner without chart or compass. Quite undismayed, however, he plunged into the unbroken forest, and, with the sun and stars for his guide, set his face resolutely towards Canada.

The adventures that befell him on his long, perilous journey would fill a volume. Game was singularly scarce. He was often without other food than roots and berries for days together. On one occasion, he came to a deserted Indian camp, and, worn out with famine and weariness, built a fire on the bed of ashes left by his foes, and flung himself down beside it to slumber. He had lain there but a few moments, when an unearthly cry broke from

the flames. This was repeated again and again. Greatly alarmed, Thompson started up.

"God save us!" he cried. "It's the foul fiend himself!"

The cries continued. He seized his rifle, and cocked it. As he did so, the ashes scattered, and out of their depths, in which his bed had been made, crawled a gigantic, half-baked tortoise—a supper fit for a king. Thompson killed him in haste, made an excellent meal, and lay down again, and slept undisturbed till morning light.

Another time, when goaded with hunger, he devoured some poisonous berries, and lay for days after, more dead than alive, his eyes set, his sufferings incredible.

Once, discovering a party of savages near at hand, he took refuge in a hollow tree, and found there for company a she-bear, curled up asleep, with two young cubs. The animal had been feasting freely on wild honey, and was in a semi-torpid state. Our hero did not disturb her; but the moment he attempted to depart she started out of her stupor, and seemed nowise inclined to part with him. A close struggle ensued, in which Thompson was desperately scratched and hugged. He despatched the brute at last with his knife, and also the cubs, and smoked enough of the flesh to last him for several days on his journey.

But another foe lurked in the wilderness, which was neither the Indian nor the wild beast. One night, after weary miles of solitary travel, Thompson lay down to rest—sick, aching, and sore. When morning came he could not lift his head. He was down with fever.

The rude camp he had made was on the borders of a stream. His sufferings soon became terrible. He would have perished from starvation but for a few scraps of dried meat left still in the pouch at his belt. He would have died from thirst but for the close proximity of the water, to which, in his delirium, he dragged himself, and lay panting on its brink, filling the forest with incoherent ravings.

In this extremity a party of Indians, on a visit to their French allies, came upon his camp. They recognized the disease, and fled again in great terror, taking with them the unfortunate man's rifle. Thompson saw the dusky faces bending over him for a moment, and the next they were gone, like some fantasy of his poor crazed brain. One old squaw, however, prompted by some merciful impulse, crept back after the departure of the others, and threw him a crust of maize bread, and a little parched corn. Then she, too, disappeared, and left him to die alone.

The loss of his rifle was a terrible misfortune. The season advanced, and the long frosty nights of autumn stole upon him. Thompson began to hear the wolves howling dismally around his camp. His iron constitution rallied from the grip of the disease, but he could not at once resume his journey. Not daring to sleep weaponless on the ground, he dragged himself, with great difficulty, into a tree-top, where, night after night, he would hear the wolves growling and snarling, and rubbing their gaunt, hairy bodies about the trunk below.

With the first return of strength, he set forth again upon his pilgrimage. Winter was now approaching rapidly. The necessity of reaching a settlement became every day more pressing. He was wasted to a skeleton with sickness and hardship. He had no weapon but his knife, and he suffered untold torments from hunger, often living for days together upon roots and herbs.

At last, one dreary night, drenched with rain and staggering from weakness, Thompson sank in his tracks upon the wet, sodden, forest earth. He believed his last hour had come. A great numbness seized upon his limbs; consciousness forsook him; he lay in that dreary wilderness as senseless as the dead. When life returned again, he found himself soaked with wet, and chilled to the bone. As he lay confused and bewildered, and too weak to rise, a singular sound near at hand fell on his ear. He listened. It was neither bird nor beast, nor any ordinary voice of the forest. Again and again he heard it—a long-drawn, pitiable moan of some human creature in distress.

Thompson reeled to his feet.

"Who's there?" he called aloud.

Faint and full of anguish, a voice answered, with one word, "Help!"

At this appeal, Thompson gathered his remaining strength, and started in the direction of the cry. He had gone but a few rods when he stumbled upon a camp. There, in sore extremity, on a pile of skins, lay a French trader, sick of the same malady from which Thompson had just recovered.

"Oh, *mon Dieu!*" cried the Frenchman, as our hero drew near to him in the dark, "who is this?"

"Hoot, man," answered Thompson, in his broad Scotch, "jist a puir body that's lost in the wilderness, and starved for a bite and a sup. What's amiss wi' ye?"

"Monsieur, I am ill—frightfully ill—all have deserted me—all left me to die alone. Take this tinder-box at my head, and strike a light. In the name of God, do not leave me! I have many skins—I have money—all shall be yours, if you will stay! I have suffered such torments here alone as I can never tell, monsieur! You are lost? Here is my camp. You are starved? It is full of food and drink. Take what you will, but, for the love of God and His blessed saints, do not leave me to die like a dog!"

To the Frenchman's surprise and relief, Thompson seemed in nowise moved at the nature of his illness.

"Dinna fash yoursel' aboot that, mon," said he. "I'm nay so anxious to leave as ye suppose. I care nought for the disorder. I've suffered the same mysel'. I'll bide by ye—never fear."

He lighted a fire, and ministered to the trader as his needs required. He found the camp supplied with provisions, brandy, arms, and ammunition. The Frenchman regarded him with wild joy. Thompson, on his part, knew that but for this haven of timely succour and shelter, he himself must have perished.

In his gratitude, he set himself down to nurse the sick Frenchman. This he did with such skill and patience, that the latter soon began to mend. As

he grew stronger, the two talked much together. Thompson told his own story, and discovered in turn that his companion had long been a trader among the Indians, and possessed great influence with some of the southerly tribes.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he said, "I owe you much, monsieur—I will repay you. You shall go with me to Canada. I will help you to find your Hannah. I know of a tribe on the St. Lawrence who bought a white girl two months ago for a jug of whiskey. The red rascals will not always give up their captives to us. Some they reserve for higher prices. We will go and seek the one of whom I have spoken."

As soon as the Frenchman could travel, and just as the first snow was sharpening the air, the two broke camp, and passed over into Canada. With all speed they journeyed together to the tribe who had bought the girl.

Alas! the captive proved to be not Hannah, but a strapping *fraulein* from the New York settlements, whose broken Dutch neither could understand. Thompson's disappointment was so great that he withdrew from his friend, and, sheltering himself behind a tree, wept bitterly.

Quite unshaken in courage, however, he began his search anew. The cold, inclement winter overtook him, and forced him to abandon it for a season, and work for his own shelter and sustenance. The money in his belt he still kept untouched, reserved for any emergency that might occur.

Many hopes and disappointments assailed him through that tedious winter. Many white captives were brought in, and, aided by his faithful friend the trader, poor Thompson searched among them tirelessly, but found no Hannah.

Spring came. His heart began to fail him. Fears of her death, either by hardship or the tomahawks of her captors, weighed upon him. The forest was putting forth the leaf, and the young maize shooting through the brown soil, when the trader one day came to Thompson with the following news. A tribe upon the Ottawa River had a captive white woman, bought of a party of Tarrantines. She was reported to be young and beautiful. It was more than probable that it was Hannah.

Thompson shouldered his rifle, and started for the Ottawa, taking the trader as interpreter. They arrived at the Indian village one sunny June day, and made known their errand to the chief. The price he had paid for his captive was a horn of powder, and twenty beaver skins. He pointed from the door of his lodge to a field hard by, where she was then at work. With a pale face, and lips set tight together, Thompson, followed by the trader, crept along the edge of the field, and, under cover of a thicket, peered out upon the captive.

She stood, bareheaded in the sun, hoeing corn with some Indian women. She was thin and wan with long suffering. Her yellow hair hung down about her sad, sweet face, darkened now by wind and weather. She was weeping silently as she worked.

"Hannah!" screamed Thompson, and leaped into the field, all gaunt, wild, and hairy, and caught the captive in his arms, and sobbed over her like some mother over her recovered young.

"Merciful Heaven!" cried poor Hannah; "is it you, Dave? How came you here?"

"I came seeking ye, lass!" he answered. "I've been seeking ye, far and wide, since the night ye were lost."

"And where is Rube?"

"I left him ten months ago at St. George."

She looked up in his working face, and it all seemed to flash upon her at once.

"Oh, Dave!" she cried—"oh, Dave!" and flung her arms around his neck, and burst into tears.

Dave Thompson bought the captive of her Indian owners with the fifty dollars in his belt—his earthly all. He returned with her, safe and sound, to St. George, bringing, also, many costly gifts from his friend the trader.

Reuben Kidd did not appear to claim Hannah. In fact, she found him wedded to another sweetheart, and settled upon a few acres outside the garrison. He had, long before, given up both his friend and his betrothed for dead.

"It's better so," laughed Hannah; "for, had he waited for me, Dave, he would have lived and died unmarried."

That Fellow Sanders.

SANDERS has a serious weakness: he is a great winker. He can't talk to you two minutes without enforcing his point with a drop of one of his upper eyelids; he never takes a letter out of the office without winking at one of the clerks; he winks when he duns you, and gives you a sly one when he pays a bill. When he meets and greets you in the street, it is always with a significant closing of the left eye; and when he has a strange piece of news to tell you, his wink is one of the greatest import.

The world moved along smoothly enough with Sanders until last Friday. Up to that time he had gone winking and blinking along peacefully enough, and no clouds had obscured his happiness; but a pall is hanging over Sanders now, and life has no charms for him.

It's all his wife's fault, he says; she had no business to send him to the linendraper's. She wanted a bow to match one on her hat, and she started Sanders off to procure it.

He entered the shop whistling, and when one of the shop-girls approached and said "Good morning," he winked, and replied—

"Good morning."

The girl blushed, and looked nervous. Sanders displayed the bow, and said—

"Got anything to match that?" and winked again.

The girl vanished to the back-room, with flaming cheeks, leaving Sanders to stare after her in open-mouthed wonder.

In a minute or two the milliner, who had been informed of his actions, appeared. She was highly indignant, and, as she slammed the door behind her, she said—

"Sir—"

"Good morning, madam," said Sanders. "Fine day, aint it, now?"

And a wink was unconsciously given at the lady.

She bridled up instantly.

"Sir, the conduct—"

"Of that girl?" interrupted Sanders. "Oh, that's all right—never mind her. Little bashful, eh?"

Another tremendous wink.

"I cannot permit such conduct, sir. It is shameful and insulting."

"Not at all—not at all," says Sanders. "Don't say another word—we understand each other."

Another portentous wink.

The milliner vanishes, slamming the back door behind her, and Sanders sinks into a seat, ejaculating—

"Well, I'll be blessed!"

But he bounded up quickly when a gentleman entered, and, calling him "an insulting scoundrel," proceeded to divest himself of his coat, and, squaring up to Sanders, cried out—

"Now, then, come on!"

"Why, why, bless me! What does this mean?" said Sanders.

"Oh, yes, you're a nice one, you are! What kind of a place do you take this for? Coming here and insulting women and girls with your winks. Come on!"

And he danced around Sanders.

During the next ten minutes he was busy all over Sanders, who fared like Mr. Pickwick with the infuriated cabman. For one fist visited Sanders's eye, another his nose, and this was followed up by a kind of shampooing all over his chest and shoulders; till at last the unfortunate winkist went down, and sat on the shop floor, panting; and when he did get up, it was to rush out of that place of business, leaving his wife's bow behind.

To make matters worse, Mrs. Sanders would not believe that her dear lord had been to the draper's at all, nor that the master of the establishment was a lunatic; declaring her conviction that Sanders had been quarrelling and fighting, to his lasting disgrace.

Poor Sanders! He never found out what it all meant until the milliner's husband, who had ascertained his habit, called on Sunday and apologized.

Sanders shook hands, said it was all right, and was just about to wink again, when he checked himself, and said, like Rip Van Winkle—

"Blame it! I'll swear off that habit."

And then he turned and winked at the wall to enforce his oath.

JONES said that, if you want to find out the weak points in the character of any one of your female friends, you should praise her to your wife.

BROWN has heard that a certain woman is writing a lecture on "Woman's Duties," and cruelly suggests that the first duty is to burn the manuscript.

COLERIDGE was a remarkably awkward horseman, so much so as generally to attract notice. He was once riding along a turnpike road, when a wag approaching noticed his peculiarity, and thought the rider a fine subject for a little sport, and as he drew near, he thus accosted the poet, "I say, young man, did you meet a tailor on the road?" "Yes," replied Coleridge, "and he told me if I went a little further I should meet with his goose."

Tit-Bits from Helen's Babies.

MY trunk had contained nearly everything, for while a campaigner I had learned to reduce packing to an exact science. Now, had there been an atom of pride in my composition I might have glorified myself, for it, certainly seemed as if the heap upon the floor could never have come out of a single trunk. Clearly Toddie was more of a general connoisseur than an amateur in packing. The method of his work I quickly discerned, and the discovery threw some light upon the size of the heap in front of my trunk. A dress hat and its case, when their natural relationship is dissolved, occupy nearly twice as much space as before, even if the former contains a blacking-box not usually kept in it, and the latter contains a few cigars soaking in bay rum. The same might be said of a portable dressing-case and its contents, bought for me in Vienna by a brother ex-soldier, and designed by an old continental campaigner to be perfection itself. The straps which prevented the cover from falling entirely back had been cut, broken, or parted in some way, and in its hollow lay my dress coat, tightly rolled up. Snatching it up with a violent exclamation, and unrolling it, there dropped from it—one of those infernal dolls. At the same time a howl was sounded from the doorway.

"You tookt my dolly out of her k'adle—I want to wock* my dolly—oo—oo—oo—ee—ee—ee—"

"You young scoundrel," I screamed—yes, howled, I was so enraged—"I've a great mind to thrash you well. What do you mean by meddling with my trunk?"

"I—doe—know." Outward turned Toddie's lower lip; I believe the sight of it would move a Bengal tiger to pity, but no such thought occurred to me just then.

"What made you do it?"

"Be—cause."

"Because what?"

"I—doe—know."

Just then a terrific roar arose from the garden. Looking out, I saw Budge with a bleeding finger upon one hand, and my razor in the other; he afterwards explained that he had been making a boat, and that knife was bad to him.

Calling the girl, I asked her where the key was that locked the door between my room and the children.

"Please, sir, Toddie threw it down the well."

"Is there a locksmith in the village?"

"No, sir; the nearest one is at Paterson."

"Is there a screwdriver in the house?"

"Yes, sir."

"Bring it to me, and tell the coachman to get ready at once to drive me to Paterson."

The screwdriver was brought, and with it I removed the lock, got into the carriage, and told the driver to take me to Paterson by the hill road—one of the most beautiful roads in America.

"Paterson!" exclaimed Budge. "Oh, there's a candy store in that town! Come on, Toddie."

"Will you?" thought I, snatching the whip, and giving the horses a cut. "Not if I can help it. The

* Rock.

idea of having such a drive spoiled by the clatter of such a couple!"

Away went the horses, and up rose a piercing shriek and a terrible roar. It seemed that both children must have been mortally hurt; and I looked out hastily, only to see Budge and Toddie running after the carriage, and crying pitifully. It was too pitiful—I could not have proceeded without them, even if they had been afflicted with small-pox. The driver stopped of his own accord—he seemed to know the children's ways and their results—and I helped Budge and Toddie in.

I found a locksmith, and left the lock to be fitted with a key; then we drove to the Falls. Both boys discharged volleys of questions as we stood by the gorge, and the fact that the roar of the falling water prevented me from hearing them did not cause them to relax their efforts in the least. I walked to the hotel for a cigar, taking the children with me. I certainly spent no more than three minutes in selecting and lighting a cigar, and asking the bar-keeper a few questions about the Falls; but when I turned the children were missing, nor could I see them in any direction. Suddenly before my eyes arose from the nearer brink of the gorge two yellowish discs, which I recognized as the hats of my nephews; then I saw between the discs and me two small figures lying upon the ground. I was afraid to shout for fear of scaring them, if they happened to hear me. I bounded across the grass, industriously raving and praying by turns. They were lying on their stomachs, and looking over the edge of the cliff. I approached them on tiptoe, threw myself upon the ground, and grasped a foot of each child.

"Oh, Uncle Harry," screamed Budge, in my ear, as I dragged him close to me, kissing and shaking him alternately, "I hungan over more than Toddie did."

"Well, I—I—I—I—I—I—hungan over a good deal, anyhow," said Toddie, in self-defence.

I ventured upon a war story.

"Do you know what the war was?" I asked, by way of reconnaissance.

"Oh, yes," said Budge, "papa was there, an' he's got a sword; don't you see it, hangin' up there?"

Yes, I saw it, and the difference between the terrible field where last I saw Tom's sword in action, and this quiet room where it now hung, forced me into a reverie from which I was aroused by Budge remarking:

"Aint you goin' to tell us one?"

"Oh, yes, Budge. One day while the war was going on, there was a whole lot of soldiers going along a road, and they were as hungry as they could be; they hadn't had anything to eat that day."

"Why didn't they go into the houses, and tell the people they was hungry? That's what I do when I goes along roads."

"Because the people in that country didn't like them: the brothers and papas and husbands of those people were soldiers too; but they didn't like the soldiers I told you about first, and they wanted to kill them."

"I don't think they were a bit nice," said Budge, with considerable decision.

"Well, the first soldiers wanted to kill them, Budge."

"Then they was all bad, to want to kill each other."

"Oh, no, they weren't; there were a great many real good men on both sides."

Poor Budge looked sadly puzzled, as he had an excellent right to do, since the wisest and best men are sorely perplexed by the nature of warlike feeling.

"Both parties of soldiers were on horseback," I continued, "and they were near each other; and when they saw each other, they made their horses run fast, and the bugles blew, and the soldiers all took their swords out to kill each other with, when just then a little boy, who had been out in the woods to pick berries for his mamma, tried to run across the road, and caught his toe some way, and fell down and cried. Then somebody hallooed 'Halt!' very loud, and all the horses on one side stopped; and then somebody else hallooed 'Halt!' and a lot of bugles blew, and every horse on the other side stopped; and one soldier jumped off his horse and picked up the little boy—he was only about as big as you, Budge—and tried to comfort him; and then a soldier from the other side came up to look at him, and then more soldiers came from both sides to look at him; and when he got better and walked home, the soldiers all rode away, because they didn't feel like fighting just then."

"O Uncle Harry! I think it was an awful good soldier that got off his horse to take care of that poor little boy."

"Do you, Budge?—who do you think it was?"

"I dunno."

"It was your papa."

The next day was the Sabbath.

At about 5.30 a.m., a flying body, with more momentum than weight, struck me upon the not prominent bridge of my nose, and speedily and with unnecessary force accommodated itself to the outline of my eyes. After a moment spent in anguish, and in wondering how the missive came through closed doors and windows, I discovered that my pain had been caused by one of the dolls, which, from its extreme uncleanness, I suspected belonged to Toddie; I also discovered that the door between the rooms was open.

"Who threw that doll?" I shouted, sternly.

There came no response.

"Do you hear?" I roared.

"What is it, Uncle Harry?" asked Budge, with most exquisitely polite inflection.

"Who threw that doll?"

"Huh?"

"I say, who threw that doll?"

"Why, nobody did it."

"Toddie, who threw that doll?"

"Budge did," replied Toddie, in muffled tones, suggestive of a brotherly hand laid forcibly over a pair of small lips.

"Budge, what did you do it for?"

"Why—why—I—because—why, you see—because, why, Toddie froo his dolly in my mouth;

some of her hair went in, anyhow, an' I didn't want his dolly in my mouth, so I sent it back to him, an' the foot of the bed didn't stick up enough, so it went froo the door to your bed—that's what for."

The explanation seemed to bear marks of genuineness, albeit the pain of my eye was not alleviated thereby, while the exertion expended in eliciting the information had so thoroughly awakened me that further sleep was out of the question. Besides, the open door—had a burglar been in the room? No: my watch and pocket-book were undisturbed.

"Budge, who opened that door?"

After some hesitation, as if wondering who really did it, Budge replied, "Me."

"How did you do it?"

"Why, you see, we wanted a drink, an' the door was fast, so we got out the window on the parazzo roof, an' comed in your window." (Here a slight pause.) "An' t was fun. An' then we unlocked the door an' comed back."

Then I should be compelled to lock my window-blinds—or theirs, and this in the summer season!

"I wants to come in your bed."

"What for, Toddie?"

"To fwolic; papa always fwolics us Sunday mornin's. Tum, Budgie, Ucken Hawwy's doein' to fwolic us."

Budge replied by shrieking with delight, tumbling out of bed, and hurrying to that side of my bed not already occupied by Toddie. Then those two little savages sounded the onslaught, and advanced precipitately upon me.

"Budge," said I, "what do you do Sundays when your papa and mamma are home? What do they read to you?—what do they talk about?"

"Oh, they swing us—lots!" said Budge, with brightening eyes.

"An' zey takes us to get jacks," observed Toddie.

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Budge; "jacks-in-the-pulpit—don't you know?"

"Hum—ye—es; I do remember some such thing in my youthful days. They grow where there's plenty of mud, don't they?"

"Yes; an' there's a brook there, an' ferns, an' birch-bark, an' if you don't look out you'll tumble into the brook when you go to get birch."

"An' we goes to Hawksnest Rock," piped Toddie, "an' papa carries us up on his back when we gets tired."

"An' he makes us whistles," said Budge.

"Budge," said I, rather hastily, "enough. In the language of the poet—

'These earthly pleasures I resign,
and I'm rather astonished that your papa hasn't taught
you to do likewise. Don't he ever read to you?'

"Oh, yes," cried Budge, clapping his hands, as a happy thought struck him. "He gets down the Bible—the great *big* Bible, you know—an' we all lay on the floor, an' he reads us stories out of it. There's David, an' Noah, an' when Christ was a little boy, an' Joseph."

"An' papa takes us in the woods, an' makes us canes," said Toddie.

"Yes," said Budge, "and where there's new houses buildin', he takes us up ladders."

"Has he any way of putting an extension on the afternoon?" I asked.

"I don't know what that is," said Budge, "but he puts an india-rubber blanket on the grass, and then we all lie down and make b'lieve we're soldiers asleep. Only sometimes, when we wake up, papa stays asleep, an' mamma won't let us wake him. I don't think that's a very nice play."

"Well, I think Bible stories are nicer than anything else, don't you?"

Budge seemed somewhat in doubt.

"I think swinging is nicer," said he—"oh, no;—let's get some jacks—I'll tell you what!—make us whistles, an' we can blow 'em while we're going to get the jacks. Toddie, dear, wouldn't you like jacks and whistles?"

"Yesh—an' swingin'—an' birch—an' wantsh to go to Hawksnest Rock," answered Toddie.

"Let's have Bible stories first," said I. "The Lord mightn't like it if you didn't learn anything good to-day."

"Well," said Budge, with the regulation religious-matter-of-duty face, "let's. I guess I like 'bout Joseph best."

"Tell us 'bout Bliaff," suggested Toddie.

"Oh, no, Tod," remonstrated Budge; "Joseph's coat was just as bloody as Goliath's head was."

Then Budge turned to me, and explained that "all Tod likes Goliath for is 'cause when his head was cut off, it was all bloody."

And then Toddie—the airy sprite, whom his mother described as being irresistibly drawn to whatever was beautiful—Toddie glared upon me as a butcher's apprentice might stare at a doomed lamb, and remarked—

"Bliaff's head was all bluggy, an' David's sword was all bluggy—bluggy as everyfing."

I opened the Bible, turned to the story of Joseph, and audibly condensed it as I read—

"Joseph was a good little boy whose papa loved him very dearly. But his brothers didn't like him. And they sold him, to go to Egypt. And he was very smart, and told people what their dreams meant, and he got to be a great man. And his brothers went to Egypt to buy corn, and Joseph sold them some, and then he let them know who he was. And he sent them home to bring their papa to Egypt, and then they all lived there together."

"That aint it," remarked Toddie, with the air of a man who felt himself to be unjustly treated. "Is it, Budge?"

"Oh, no," said Budge, "you didn't read it good a bit; I'll tell you how it is. Once there was a little boy named Joseph, an' he had eleven budders—they was awful eleven budders. An' his papa gave him a new coat, an' his budders hadn't nothin' but their old jackets to wear. An' one day he was carryin' 'em their dinner, an' they put him in a deep dark hole, but they didn't put his nice new coat in; they killed a kid, an' dipped the coat—just think of doing that to a nice new coat—they dipped it in the kid's blood, an' made it all bloody."

"All bluggy," echoed Toddie, with ferocious emphasis. Budge continued:

"But there were some Ishmalites comin' along that way, and the awful eleven budders took him out

of the deep dark hole, an' sold him to the Ishmalites, an' they sold him away down in Egypt. An' his poor old papa cried, an' cried, an' cried, cause he thought a big lion ate Joseph up: but he wasn't ate up a bit; but there wasn't no post-office nor choochoos (railway cars), nor stages in Egypt, an' there wasn't any telegraphs, so Joseph couldn't let his papa know where he was; an' he got so smart an' so good that the king of Egypt let him sell all the corn an' take care of the money: an' one day some men came to buy some corn, an' Joseph looked at 'em, an' there they was his own budders! An' he scared 'em like everything. I'd have slapped 'em all if I'd been Joseph, but he just scared 'em, an' then he let 'em know who he was, an' he kissed 'em, an' he didn't whip 'em, or make 'em go without their breakfast, or stand in a corner, nor none of them things; an' then he sent 'em back for their papa, an' when he saw his papa comin' he ran like everything, and gave him a great big hug and a kiss. Joseph was too big to ask his papa if he'd brought him any candy, but he was awful glad to see him. An' the king gave Joseph's papa a nice farm, an' they all had real good times after that."

"An' they dipped the coat in the blood, an' made it all bluggy," reiterated Toddie.

"Uncle Harry," said Budge, "what do you think my papa would do if he thought I was all ate up by a lion? I guess he'd cry awful, don't you? Now tell us another story—oh, I'll tell you—read us 'bout—"

"Bout Bliaff," interrupted Toddie.

"You tell me about him, Toddie," said I.

"Why," said Toddie, "Bliaff was a brate bid man, an' Dave was brate little man, an' Bliaff said, 'Come over here, an' I'll eat you up,' an' Dave said, 'I aint syaid of you.' So Dave put five little stones in a sling an' asked de Lord to help him, an' let ze sling go bang in bequeen Bliaff's eyes, an' knocked him down dead, an' Dave took Bliaff's sword an' sworded Bliaff's head off, an' made it all bluggy, and Bliaff runned away."

A Hunting Adventure with Cheetahs.

ANY one who pays a visit to the Zoological Gardens will see at the present time, in the new lion house, two or three splendid specimens of the cheetah or hunting leopard. They are curious, cat-like creatures, spotted after the fashion of the ordinary leopard; but they are tall, thin, have long muscular legs, and very small heads. In fact, they may be looked upon, if it is not an Irish bull, as the greyhound of the cat tribe.

Here is an account of the adventures of a party which enjoyed a day's sport with these creatures in Baroda.

The party were astir early in the morning, and were driven to Etola, a little station about eight miles to the south of Baroda. Etola used to be the centre of the Guicowar Khunderao's hunting grounds, the country for miles around being filled with black buck and wild pig, all of which were strictly preserved. Khunderao's brother, Mulbarrao, was by no means an ardent sportsman, and Etola soon lost much of the importance with which it used to be invested in the reign of Khunderao. On this

occasion it looked as if its glory had revived. A number of carriages were drawn up in the station compound, and some saddled and bridled horses pranced impatiently in the keen morning air.

These were mounted, and the whole party went across a rough country. The face of it was studded with groves of trees, between which could be occasionally perceived the fleeting form of some startled antelope. On nearing Muckunpoora, the eccentric name of the palace in which Khunderao died, and which is a large, oblong, picturesquely-painted building, composed of terrace above terrace, each terrace above being smaller than the one beneath, until the palace ends in a small square tower, delightfully exposed to the breeze, the party turned off to the right, across cotton fields and dusty roads, whose primitive state severely tried the springs of the carriages. The party came at last to a part of the road where it dipped between two high banks, as if it had been scoured out by floods, and on turning a corner and going up the opposite side of the road they reached the rendezvous.

On one side stood a Hindoo temple which is supposed to be peculiarly sacred, and from which now floated the sound of bells—betraying the presence of some devotee calling upon his gods to hear him. On another side stood a little white house, with a large verandah attached, the usual wayside resting-house for the Guicowars when upon their hunting expeditions. Mango trees scattered here and there offered a grateful shade to the travellers, who beheld Muckunpoora Palace in the distance, and a seemingly boundless plain on the right, divided here and there by prickly pear hedges.

Sitting or lying upon a number of bullock carts, staring around with their large orange eyes, were hunting cheetahs, fastened only by a rope tied round their loins. The "burrah billies," or big cats, as the natives delight to term the cheetahs, were perfectly quiet. Natives passed and repassed within an inch of their noses, almost brushing their large whiskers, but they never ventured to molest them, continuing to stare into the distance as if they already saw their prey.

The party left their carriages and scrambled into one of the bullock carts, the horsemen did likewise; and when all had been seated the procession started off across the plain, passing, with many a jerk which made the travellers wince, over cotton and grain fields, and through patches of stubby grass, in which occasionally a sharp eye could detect the hasty retreat of a cobra or some other kind of snake. This rough mode of travelling was continued for a mile and a half or two miles, when suddenly one of the cheetah carts was stopped, and the whole procession came to a halt. Among some high grass to the right a cluster of tall horns could be seen after the eye had become accustomed to them; and when still more experience had been achieved, herds of black buck could be perceived moving about in every direction.

A hood was drawn over the head of the cheetah whose cart had been brought to a standstill; the cart proceeded a little nearer to the herd; a native huntsman, who was sitting behind the cheetah, untied the rope that fastened round it, then, standing

up and holding one hand on the hood and the other on the collar of the cheetah, he waited for a few seconds and whipped off the hood.

For an instant the creature stared round, and then perceiving the herd, which by this time was moving slowly off, he leaped noiselessly off the cart, and went crouching along the ground till within forty yards of the herd. Then, singling out one of the biggest bucks, he bounded along at an incredible pace. A desperate run for two or three hundred yards took place; but the buck being in fine condition, and having had a flying start, was not caught at that distance, although the leopard was close upon him, and the leopard sulked and stopped, glaring and shaking his long tail. A shikarree (or native huntsman) ran after the cheetah, threw the hood over his eyes, clutched him by the collar, and led him back to the cart like a large Newfoundland dog. The beast leaped quietly upon the cart, and lay down and licked his paws.

They had not proceeded far, when they observed two black bucks fighting furiously, while a number of female deer a short distance off looked on. A cheetah was slipped at the combatants, who instantly made off at a great pace, but not before the animal had got up his full speed, and was flying after the bigger of the two. The deer marked down by the cheetah was soon overtaken. The pursuer, in its last great bound, leaped with accurate judgment upon the haunches of the buck. There was a struggle in the dust for a second, during which leopard and buck seemed to roll together; but it was soon over, for the cheetah, quitting its grip upon the haunches, had seized the deer by the throat and pinned it to the ground. The deer kicked violently, but the cheetah had taken the precaution to lie across its throat, out of reach of its legs. The shikarrees rushed up to the spot where the struggling was taking place. One of them drew his long knife and cut the buck's throat, and filling a gory wooden ladle with blood, the dish was placed under the leopard's nose. The cheetah forthwith relinquished its hold upon the deer, and plunged its huge cat-face into the blood, a proceeding which soon made it a very hideous-looking animal.

The shikarrees then disembowelled the deer; some vultures that had been watching the chase from a short distance overhead, swooped down upon the entrails; the quarry was dragged off to a cart, and tied under it; and the cheetah was led off to its cart, and hoodwinked as before. The hunting party thus went on—slipping here a cheetah and there a cheetah. Sometimes they failed and sulked; at other times brought down the fleet quarry in brilliant style. The hunters covered many a mile of the ground, and still found herds of deer to the right and left of them. The sport went on from shortly before eight o'clock till nearly ten, during which time five cheetahs had killed eight bucks among them. The hunters then travelled homeward, across the fields again, until they reached the rendezvous, the sun being too hot to continue the sport.

AN old farmer says:—"A flock of sheep composed of all 'wethers' may be said to resemble our climate."

The Egotist's Note-book.

LORD Truro has been finding fault with the police *apropos* of the Blackheath highway robberies, and says that many outrages have taken place in his neighbourhood. The Lord Chancellor defended "Robert," or, as it seems he is now to be called, "the Copper." He said that "he had been furnished with a return of the outrages referred to, and their lordships would judge of their character. On the 30th of April, 1874, there was an entry in the occurrence book at Shooter's Hill Station:—'Stolen or strayed, a large black hen turkey on the information from Lord Truro.' The next was a game hen on thirteen eggs, stolen on the 16th of March, 1875; then, on the 19th of September, 1876, eight white Aylesburys, which were only spoken of as having strayed; then there was a black American cock and two goslings out of a brood of nine, only three days' old, which were described as having been stolen from Lord Truro's property at Shooter's Hill; but, considering that if anybody stole two goslings he would be likely enough to steal the whole brood, it was very likely they had strayed away." This is all very well; but, all the same, highway robberies did take place on Blackheath, and people reasonably said, "Where were the police?" At the present time the word detective does not sound well, and it is to be hoped that the character of the force will be cleared from the charges alleged against it.

In a late debate:

Mr. Biggar: As the measure stood it was a most unreasonable one, and some of the clauses were two pages long, and how the deuce— (Cries of "Order," and "Chair.")

The Chairman rose to order, and remarked that such expressions were unbecoming in the House of Commons (Hear, hear).

Mr. Biggar: I beg to apologize, then.

Without excuse,
"And how the deuce—" Cries Esop Cavan, with a snigger,
Says the Chairman "Order;
"That's beyond the border."
"I apologize," says Biggar.

Thus it's very plain,
All his ends to gain
In his great obstructive revel;
Lacking ace or tray,
In his hand to play,
Biggar plays the deuce—or devil.

It is very good of Mr. Noel to put up skeleton shapes suggestive of Cleopatra's needle in St. Stephen's-square and on the Embankment; but had he not better attend to the precept of Mrs. Glasse, of culinary fame—"First catch your hare"? The Needle has not yet threaded the Mediterranean, and, like other needles, it may show a disposition to be lost. If it be, the famous old search for a needle in a bottle of hay will be a very mild performance in comparison with dredging the sea; and Mr. Noel's skeletons will be terribly *apropos* of the death of a notorious scheme.

What will the strong-minded ladies, and the weak-minded gentlemen, their followers, say to Dr. Barnes, who, on reading a paper at the Medical Association meeting, referred "to the subject of female medical practitioners, and said he would not question that the feminine intellect was equal to the pulpit or the bar, but as to medicine, discussion was superfluous"? Some ladies will think this is rank heresy, but, all the same, it is the opinion of one of the greatest men of our time; and lives there a lady who would not believe in Dr. Barnes?

THE LEWES PERJURY CASE.

Mr. Frederick Lister

Loved his cousin, and kissed her.

Said Pa—"She's your cousin, and nearly your sister."

Soon after he missed her—

She became Mrs. Lister.

So Pa, for a twister,

Tried the husband for perjury: which was a blister.

The following advertisement appears in one of the daily papers:—

"One thousand pounds reward, or 5,000 dollars.—It having come to the knowledge of the undersigned that a conspiracy exists on the part of the Hon. P. T. Barnum for the abduction of Zazel, the above reward will be paid to any one giving such information as will lead to the conviction of the said Hon. P. T. Barnum.

Signed { W. W. ROBERTSON.
G. A. FARINI.

"Royal Aquarium, July 20."

To which one says ahem! But, by the way, can one man conspire?

The best costume for the summer holiday would be a pair of Waukenphast's boots, Miles's trousers, and a Townsend's hat.

I see that Madame Rose Hersee sang at the Crystal Palace the other day the cavatina "Porgi amor." Is this our old friend of childhood in an Italian garb? I mean the song of Georgey Porgey, who behaved in so bashful a manner after saluting the ladies. The "Porgi" and "amor" seem to suggest that it is.

PERFECTION.—Mrs. S. A. Allen's World's Hair Restorer never fails to restore Grey Hair to its youthful colour, imparting to it new life, growth, and lustrous beauty. Its action is speedy and thorough, quickly banishing greyness. Its value is above all others; a single trial proves it. It is not a dye. It ever proves itself the natural strengthener of the Hair. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

Mrs. S. A. Allen has for over 40 years manufactured these two preparations. They are the standard articles for the Hair. They should never be used together, nor Oil nor Pomade with either.

Mrs. S. A. Allen's Zylo-Balsamum, a simple Tonic and Hair Dressing of extraordinary merit for the young. Premature loss of the Hair, so common, is prevented. Prompt relief in thousands of cases has been afforded where Hair has been coming out in handfuls. It cleanses the Hair and scalp, and removes Dandruff. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.—[ADVT.]

JAN 4 1935

